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A Queeny Christmas In Royal Oak

BTL Editorial: Time To Rise Up

> "If the information we've been spreading for the purposes of HIV/AIDS prevention and protection is limiting, then we put everything that needs to be out there on the table."
>
> – Emily Dievendorf, pg. 4

DISCO DABBLER

Panic! Frontman Tells Us He's A Little Gay Before Detroit Gig

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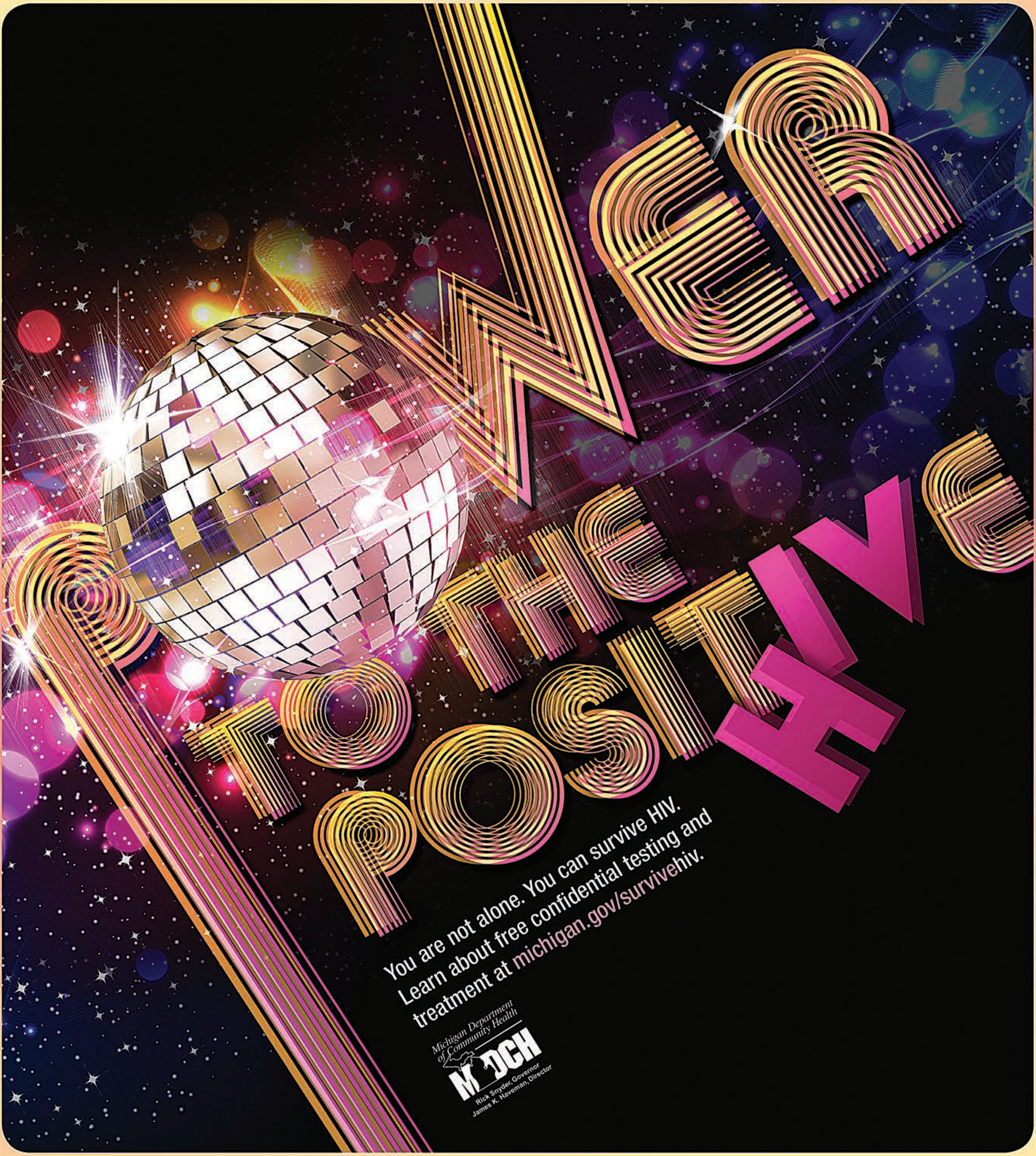
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> "We have to start with the Elliott Larson Act. You can be kicked out of your housing or fired from your job just for being perceived as being gay. We can't piecemeal protection together. We need protection for everyone in the state."
>
> –Jeremy Moss, State Rep. Candidate, pg. 16

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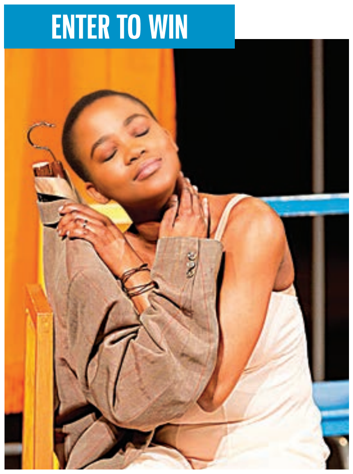

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VOL. 2149 • DEC 5, 2013 • ISSUE 842

PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP
20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone 734.293.7200

PUBLISHERS
Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

MEMBER OF
Michigan Press Assoication
National Gay Media Association
Q Syndicate

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EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief
Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 12
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor
Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 24
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Associate Editor
Benjamin Jenkins, 734.293.7200 x 14
ben@pridesource.com

News Staff Writer
Crystal Proxmire

Arts & Theater Editor
Donald V. Calamia, curtaincalls@pridesource.com

Calendar Editor
Shelby Clark, shelby@pridesource.com

CREATIVE

Art Director
Benjamin Jenkins, ben@pridesource.com

Webmaster & MIS Director
Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Contributing Writers
Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown, Todd Heywood, Jerome Stuart Nichols, Kate Opalewski, Anthony Paull, Andrea Poteet, Eric W. Rader, Gwendolyn Ann Smith, Dawn R. Wolfe

Cartoonists
Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau

Contributing Photographers
Andrew Potter

ADVERTISING & SALES

Director of Sales
Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 22
jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives
Ed Bohach, 734.293.7200 x 15
ed@pridesource.com

Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 13
anncox@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative
Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

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Business Office
Diane Smith, dianesmith@pridesource.com

Circulation & Distribution
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Crisis In HIV Prevention For Gay Community

BY TODD HEYWOOD

LANSING – Jake Sobo (not his real name) is a blogger. He's gay. He's unapologetic about being a bottom. He's also been using Truvada, an anti-HIV drug, to prevent becoming infected for a year. The intervention is called pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP.

"I started taking PrEP because I didn't use condoms every time and because I knew my odds of getting HIV were eventually going to approach 100 percent," Sobo said. "Let's face it, in some gay urban enclaves, 1 in 4 gay men have HIV and about 50 percent can expect to get it by the time they're 50. I'm a bottom, which means I'm at a particularly increased risk. PrEP was my way of taking control of my sexual health. I'm so grateful that this technology exists to help keep me negative."

Despite the intervention being approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Sobo finds himself targeted with recriminations on his various blog posts and reposts – and by allies and friends.

"Even some allies of mine have come dangerously close to shaming me for my sexual proclivities," Sobo tells BTL in an email interview. "We can barely help ourselves from trying to make people feel bad about the sex they have. Having sex behind closed doors is okay - as long as you don't' talk about it publicly, for Pete's sake!"

Sobo's experience represents the need for a re-imagination of HIV prevention messages and tools. An evolution which finds itself being fought on various fronts, with experts falling back on condoms-only prevention messages, despite evidence condoms do not work as well as other risk reduction techniques to prevent infections.

And even as the debate rages, HIV among men who have sex with men – including gay, bisexual and straight identified, but homosexually active men, as well transgender women (who are not tracked as a separate risk category) – continues to spread.

> **Despite years of indoctrination that HIV is the result of promiscuity, Greg Millett, an employee of the CDC in Atlanta assigned to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy noted that 68 percent of new infections are occurring in the context of primary sexual relationships – that's boyfriends and friends with benefits in non-science parlance – among men who have sex with men.**

'Unconscionable' Rates And Prevalence

Michigan has made strides to reverse increasing infections in women and intravenous drug users (IVDUs) over the past decade, but the risk category of MSMs continue to represent the single largest group of people represented in new infections annually. And statistical models show a trend AIDS service organization leaders in Michigan have called "staggering."

In February, BTL reported on statistics presented by Greg Millett, an employee of the CDC in Atlanta assigned to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP). Millet reported in a session on HIV during the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Creating Change Conference in Atlanta, that the current cohort of men who have sex with men who are currently age 20 have a 10 percent overall HIV prevalence rate, and it's 20 percent in black men who have sex with men. At current transmission rates, half of all men who have sex with men in that cohort will be infected in 30 years, 70 percent of black men who have sex with men will be infected.

Despite years of indoctrination that HIV is the result of promiscuity, Millett also noted that 68 percent of new infections are occurring in the context of primary sexual relationships – that's boyfriends and friends with benefits in non-science parlance – among men who have sex with men.

The reason?

Men who have sex with men are not availing themselves of HIV testing nearly as often as they need to, resulting in accidental transmissions as a result of not knowing one's HIV status. In fact, a new National Institutes of Health study reports that half of people infected will go on to infect at least one other person in the year following their infection – most often before the person is even aware they are infected. Another NIH study reported a person who was unaware of his or her HIV infection was 3.5 times more likely to transmit the virus to another person.

Underscoring those findings, a CDC study in 2010 involving 21 U.S. cities, including Detroit, found that one in five gay/bisexual men who attend bars and nightclubs was infected with HIV. Of those who were infected, 44 percent were unaware of their infection. National studies estimate that 20 percent of people infected with HIV are unaware of their infection.

Over half of cases in Michigan are in men who have sex with men. In addition, many of the new cases of HIV are being reported in young men who have sex with men – between 13 and 24. For instance, in Ingham County – the highest prevalence of HIV in Michigan outside of Detroit – one in five persons living with HIV who are aware of their infection is in that age group. Six percent of them at 13-19, 14 percent are between 20 and 24.

Jane DuFrane, manager of the HIV AIDS Prevention and Intervention Section (HAPIS) at the Michigan Department of Community Health, says the state is "in line" with the national trends, and witnessing more cases of new HIV infections in 13-24 year old MSM,

See Prevention, page 6

Prevention Options Beyond Condoms

HIV prevention has become a twisted mire of ideas and science. But most of the LGBT community has heard only one clear message about preventing HIV: use a condom, correctly and consistently every time you have sex. But new prevention tools and technology, as well as techniques are here. In order to discuss them, we need a common language. Here is an explanation of various risk reduction technologies and their effectiveness in reducing risk

The LGBT community has heard only one clear message about preventing HIV: use a condom, correctly and consistently every time you have sex. But new prevention tools and technology, as well as techniques are here.

Drug Interventions

Treatment as Prevention – Following a large scale study of heterosexual couples in Africa where one partner was HIV-positive and the other was not, it was determined that a person on a medication regime that had successfully suppressed the viral load – the measure of virus in the blood – there was a 96 percent reduction in transmission of HIV. As a result the federal government has been scaling up treatment for people living with HIV who are aware of their status as a prevention tool.

PrEP – this is the use of Truvada, a combination pill of two powerful anti-HIV drugs, taken daily to prevent infection in HIV-negative persons. It has been approved for use in men who have sex with men, as well as intravenous drug users and women at high risk. It has been proven to be as much as 72.9 percent effective in preventing infection when taken more than 90 percent of the time.

n-PEP – this intervention is the use of three or more anti-HIV drugs taken for 28 days following an exposure to HIV to prevent infection. The regime must be initiated within 72 hours of the exposure to be successful. No studies provide solid answers on the effectiveness of this intervention, but it is estimated to be 81 percent effective in preventing an infection.

Tools and Technology

Rectal mircobicides – Scientists are working feverishly to develop drug related interventions which can be applied in the anus or the vagina and prevent an infection. Some trials have proven of interest, but nothing has been approved.

Female Condoms – This is a condom that is inserted in either the anus or the vagina. It is large, and loose fitting and looks like a pocket. Ironically, this was originally designed for anal sex, however, the FDA declined to approve it for that use. Instead makers repurposed the product as a vaginal insert and it was approved. This is currently an off-label use, although several pocket or pouch condoms specifically for anal sex are working their way through the FDA approval process.

Rapid HIV Testing – Those who are infected, but unaware of the infection are significantly more likely to transmit their infection to another. As a result, testing for HIV antibodies is a key tool in preventing HIV. The CDC recommends men who have sex with men be tested every three months for HIV. Knowing one's status, whether positive or negative, is key in preventing transmission and creating prevention options for people.

Risk Reduction

Sero-sorting – this is where a person says he or she will only engage in sexual activity, whether condomless or not, with a person of the same HIV status. In theory this should be effective in preventing new transmissions, however, with the low testing rates and knowledge of actual HIV status in the MSM community, it is not very effective. A study released in 2012 at the 19th annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections found this option had a 51 percent reduction in HIV infections.

Condoms-only/no anal sex- This category is pretty self-explanatory and was found to be 74 percent effective in reducing HIV infections in the 2012 study. However, a 2013 study from CROI found that condoms are only 70 percent effective in preventing HIV infections, and only if used every time. Inconsistent condom use had no prevention effect.

Sero-positioning – In this risk reduction option, a man who has sex with men determines whether to be top or bottom based on the HIV-status of his partner. The person using sero-positioning, will opt to top for those who are HIV-positive or whose HIV status is unknown or a test is out of date. It was found in the 2012 study to be 75 percent effective in reducing infections.

Top-only – Those who are tops-only during anal sex have 86 percent reduction in transmission, according to the 2012 CROI study. This may have something to do with the already low probability risk of insertative anal sex – estimated at .065 percent for a one time sexual episode for a top by the CDC.

HIV prevention funding is simply too restricted to venture into risk reduction tools and programs beyond condoms.

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► Prevention

Continued from p. 4

particularly black MSM.

“Forty-six percent of new diagnosis between 2006 and 2010 [were black MSM],” she says.

On top of these numbers comes the unstable stream of HIV funding in Michigan, as BTL reported last week. Complicating the funding woes is a prevention paradigm pushed down by the CDC. Under this funding formula, 75 percent of federal prevention dollars (the only source of prevention funding in Michigan’s budget) must be spent on programming targeting those persons who know they are infected with HIV. The programming is called prevention for positives and was pushed as a federal program in 2001. That leaves only 25 percent of federal prevention dollars to reach high-risk groups who are not infected or who don’t know their status – a significant majority of which are men who have sex with men.

“Funders think Tom Hanks is not dying anymore,” says Barbara Murray, who retired earlier this year after more than two decades on the front lines of the HIV epidemic at AIDS Partnership Michigan. She adds, “Funders have never been good at supporting prevention programs of any kind.”

Condoms, Condoms, Condoms

The thin latex barrier has undergone a dramatic transformation since the 70s when it was purely a pregnancy prevention tool for heterosexuals to the sexed up safety device of the 90s. And with that transformation has come a growing mythology.

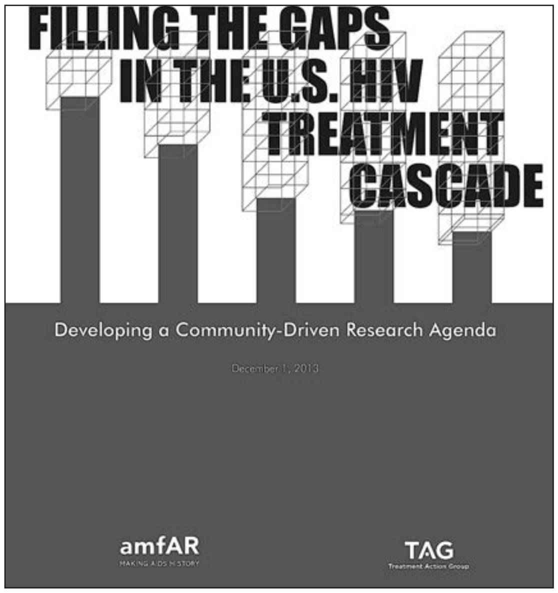
On Nov. 27, the CDC released a new report on condomless sex activity among men who have sex with men. The report was part of the agency’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), a national, weekly newsletter reporting on the latest disease outbreaks in the U.S.

“The report also provides an analysis of sexual risk over time, finding that the percentage of MSM reporting unprotected anal sex at least once during the past 12 months grew to 57 percent in 2011 from 48 percent in 2005,” The CDC reported in a press release. The CDC report was breathlessly reported by the New York Times, dutifully claiming the report was spurring fears of more new HIV infections.

What the New York Times report missed, however, was the additional findings related to condomless sex and HIV.

“The dramatic reductions in risk among those accurately aware of their status underscore the value of testing, however, 33 percent of MSM overall reported not being tested within the past 12 months. The data suggest that some men may benefit from more frequent testing,” the CDC reports. “Among those tested within the past 12 months, 5 percent of men who reported being negative or not knowing their status were found to be positive as they were tested as part of the survey. The percentage of men who did not accurately know their status dropped depending on how recently they were tested. Among those who had tested negative seven to 12 months earlier, 7 percent were found to be infected at the time of the survey, compared with 4 percent among those tested in the past three months.”

A CDC study in 2010 involving 21 U.S. cities, including Detroit, found that one in five gay/bisexual men who attend bars and nightclubs was infected with HIV. Of those who were infected, 44 percent were unaware of their infection. National studies estimate that 20 percent of people infected with HIV are unaware of their infection.



Stigma, Discrimination, and Criminalization

Thirty years into the epidemic, stigma and discrimination against, and criminalization of, both people living with HIV (PLHIV) and those most at risk continue to create significant challenges to obtaining and using effective health care. The effects of racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, violence, trauma, and criminalization must be carefully considered in the creation of any treatment cascade that can effectively monitor treatment outcomes.

amfAR and Treatment Action Group published this report on Dec. 1 looking at developing a community drivend research agenda. Download it online.

The study found 13 percent of MSM living with HIV who were aware of their infection reported condomless sex in the same time frame.

This is not the first time reports have found nearly half or more of men who have sex with men reported unprotected anal intercourse. The first study dates back as early as 1988. Recently, a study found that half of MSM using Grindr to hook up, had engaged in condomless sex.

As science has expanded, offering insights into new prevention and risk reduction tools, the condoms-only mythology remains, and is stubbornly supported by public health officials.

“We will not be getting away from the condom message,” says Angela Minicuci, spokesperson for Michigan Department of Community Health. “We are the state health department. Condoms are not only an effective tool against HIV, but they prevent STDs in general. And as the state health department we are funded by our partners on the federal level to promote that message. So we aren’t moving away from it. It’s not something we are going to be shying away from or changing anytime soon.”

DuFrane, who leads Michigan’s HIV response, says that test counselors are empowered to discuss other risk reduction options with clients in post-test counseling. Her response, however, was hesitant and unclear as to exactly what options are promoted in post-test counseling. She never referred directly to interventions such as sero-positioning and top-only, relying instead on referring to individual “options.”

BTL asked her if she was uncomfortable talking about other interventions, and she shifted uncomfortably in her seat.

Karen MacMaster, manager of the HIV/STD/VH/TB Epidemiology Section, quickly stepped into the conversation.

“The science is exciting. It’s evolving science. I think as we see repeated studies illustrating this they will become more comfortable responding to those questions,” MacMaster said of risk reduction options such as top-only and sero-positioning.

While behavioral risk reduction activities were difficult to discuss, DuFrane did discuss PrEP – the use of the anti-HIV drug Truvada Jake Sobo the blogger is taking.

“We’ve had internal discussions, we’ve had background discussions. We’re interested in the science and the outcomes,” DuFrane said of the intervention that has been approved by the FDA for all high-risk groups in the US, including MSM, IVDUs and women who have HIV-positive partners. “I think it’s an exciting possibility for the future.”

But the future is already here. Wayne State University is participating in a study among MSM ages 18-23 to evaluate PrEP and has recently announced plans to open a clinic to provide the drug to at risk MSM in that same age category. MDCH officials said they were aware of the programs, but were not participating.

If history serves as a guide to how the state will respond, it took the department nearly two years to approve statewide guidance on the application of non-occupational post-exposure prophylaxis (n-PEP). That’s the use of a 28-day course of anti-HIV drugs to prevent infection after an exposure. It must be administered within 72 hours of the exposure, or it has no effect. And the nearly two-year delay came only after it was pointed out to health officials that n-PEP had been approved by the FDA and CDC since at least 2005. Writing and issuing PrEP guidance could take as long, or longer.

As science has expanded, offering insights into new prevention and risk reduction tools, the condoms-only mythology remains, and is stubbornly supported by public health officials.

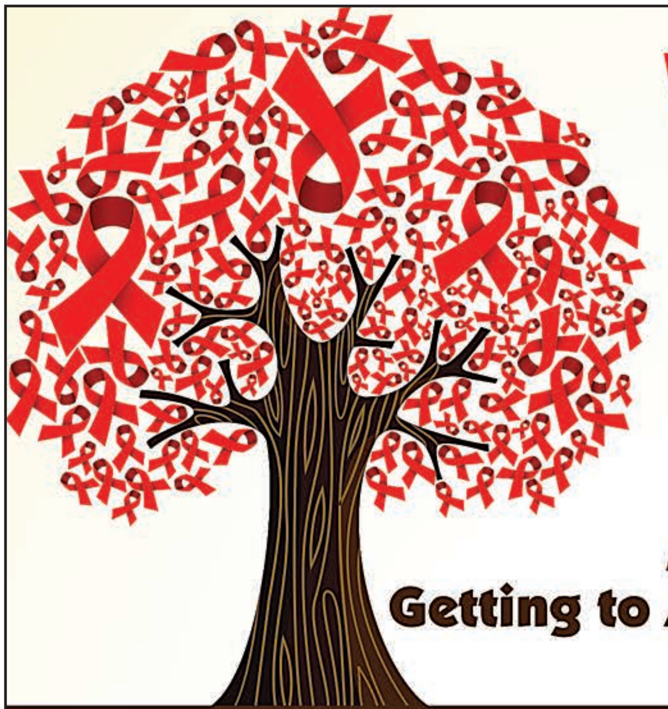
Even once implemented, DuFrane notes, the state is limited in implementing chemo-prophylaxis protocols. The state can use federal funds to build the capacity of service providers to deliver things like PrEP and n-PEP, however, it cannot offer the actual drugs using federal dollars.

And at the end of the day, funding is always an issue. As Minicuci and other state health officials have acknowledged, HIV prevention funding is simply too restricted to venture into risk reduction tools and programs beyond condoms.

That doesn’t mean the LGBT community doesn’t need to “take responsibility,” for having the difficult conversations about HIV prevention options, says Emily Dievendorf, managing director of Equality Michigan.

“I’m sure it will be difficult and uncomfortable for people that don’t want to deal with the fact that a lot of these things aren’t working. I think that a lot of us would like to think there is a solution that if we give it to people and they would just adopt it, we would resolve the problem. But that’s not the case,” she says.

“If the information that we have been spreading for the purposes of prevention and protection is limited and limiting,” she says, “then we put everything that needs to be out there out on the table.”



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Affirmations Helpline Revamped

Center's First Program Changes With Technology

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

In the 25 years that the Affirmations Helpline has been serving the public, it has seen a few changes. From the basement of someone's home, to a cramped office, to its own special room at the new community center, change has come along with the times. And now a new incarnation has begun.

Instead of being tucked away in an office, the Helpline has now been moved to the front desk area of the LGBT community center, making it more visible to anyone visiting Affirmations. The current plan is to integrate the Helpline with the main community center line so that all volunteers who answer the phone will be trained to give out the same information.

"Our goal is to make the front desk the epicenter of information," said Helpline Coordinator Johnny Jenkins. "Many of the Helpline calls come through the front desk anyway. They would have to give the person the Helpline number instead of being able to just give them the information they are looking for."

One big change will be in the efficiency of the calls. Jenkins said that many of the calls they receive are from out of state, because the hotline number is so widely available online. He said there are also many repeat calls where people just want to call and talk, or who try to use Helpline volunteers like a counselor.

"There are Helplines that are empathy-based, but most Helplines are there to give information and referrals. Because we don't have the resources, we are trying to put limits on repeat calls and stay focused on getting people connected to what help they need," said Jenkins.

On average the Helpline receives approximately 100 calls per month. People are looking for a range of information including how to come out, finding counseling, where to meet LGBT people, how to handle discrimination or mistreatment, and where to get HIV testing. Jenkins said that a common concern is where to find shelter that is safe for LGBT people.

HELPLINE
[248] 800—398—4397

The Helpline services are being integrated into the front desk where staff and volunteers can coordinate and more efficiently help people calling in. BTL photo: Crystal Proxmire

THE HELPLINE

1-800-398-GAYS

The Helpline is currently offered Monday-Saturday from 3 – 9 p.m. The phone number is 1-800-398-GAYS.

>> www.goaffirmations.org

Technology's Impact

The number of calls has gone down over the years. Communications Director Cass Varner explained, "This is due to

See Helpline, next page

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► Helpline

Continued from p. 8

a few different factors. Since the move to the new building in 2007, Affirmations has undergone a number of transitions that have affected all programming. Most notable is the recent economic recession, which resulted in high employee turnover and a decrease in the hours of operation. Another contributing factor is the fact the overall culture of Helpline services is changing. Phones no longer serve as the primary means of communications for many people - especially within the 45 and under demographic. Folks are now utilizing texting, live chat and social media. Additionally, a large percentage of our calls currently come from outside of Michigan. This has really forced us to reevaluate the program as a whole and think more strategically about marketing and outreach."

The number of people coming into the center to seek services has increased however, and the front desk is the most obvious first stop. "It is clear that the Helpline program should be integrated into the culture of the center versus staying isolated in a closed off room. We feel strongly that long-term integration of the Helpline program and front desk services would better serve center users, and those seeking accessible mental health and advocacy services. …Moving forward we plan to offer the community more information and referrals, provide a stronger reporting mechanism for the anti-bullying initiative, while also making Helpline staff and volunteers available to the public."

The anti-bullying initiative is a project in collaboration with area schools, and the single phone number provided will also serve as a place for youth to report bullying so that it can be tracked.

Affirmations' LGBT Helpline is dedicated to Jeff Kucharek, who provided the sustainable funding for the program following the launch of the capital campaign. And this year the HOPE Fund has funded the Helpline. Previous funders include the Jewish Fund, Birmingham Maple Clinic, DTE Foundation and the Ford Motor Company Fund.

A Legacy Program

The Helpline has come a long way since its humble beginnings 25 years ago. Gary Roberts, Affirmations first board president, remembers how it all got started. "The first call line was done by a group called MOHR, and it was through a grant that lasted 12 months. It was based in Detroit and it was one of the first programs they did. There were about ten to a dozen of us who worked on it and once word got out, we got a lot of calls. This was before the Internet and Google so it wasn't easy to get information like it is now. This was back in '86 or '87."

That line did not continue because the grant ran out. However several of the people involved decided to carry the idea forward. Along with Jeff Vitale, Roberts put together the paperwork to create Affirmations, with the Helpline being the organization's first big project. They promoted the Helpline through the local media and did outreach to schools to let teachers and counselors know it was available.

"We were fortunate. We had a couple of psychologists in our group and we all did training. There were a number of calls talking about their feelings about suicide. We got calls from kids who got thrown out by their parents. We built bridges with emergency shelters. We helped kids deal with schools and let them know what was going on. We didn't just take calls. It was trying to build a (safe) environment."

> *"Our goal is to make the front desk the epicenter of information."*
>
> \- Helpline Coordinator Johnny Jenkins

Affirmations grew based on what the phone calls told them was needed. "We told people about support groups," Roberts said. "Jan Stevenson created a youth group at the center and a lot of kids did that. But no matter what we did, the Helpline was the first contact. There were many times when people would call the Helpline to get a feel for Affirmations. It was a way for people to feel out if it was a safe environment. Could they get a sense of comfort from the person they were talking to?

"Most often we'd get a call from a young person asking questions. Then about a week later we'd see someone walking by three or four times, and the other youth would notice, like 'there's another one.' They'd be so nervous, and eventually they would come in. And most times they would tell us they had called the Helpline first."

The Helpline also served as the way to get information on social events for the LGBT community. "A lot of people would call to find out what was going on. There was no place to look that up. This was central for the community." Roberts said Affirmations helped organize substance-free parties where people could meet without having to go to the bars, in addition to the support groups. Programming and services has grown steadily from those humble beginnings.

Coming In Next Issue of BTL

A look at two other Hotlines serving Michigan's LGBT community.

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World AIDS Day prompted proclamations and statements from leaders and activists. Here are a few of them:

> *"We remember the friends and loved ones we have lost, stand with the estimated 35 million people living with HIV/AIDS, and renew our commitment to preventing the spread of this virus at home and abroad. If we channel our energy and compassion into science-based results, an AIDS-free generation is within our reach."*

- U.S. President Barack Obama

"This year's [World AIDS Day] theme, Getting to Zero, serves as a focus point for zero new HIV infections; zero discrimination; and zero AIDS related deaths."

- Gov. Rick Snyder

"When the World Health Organization established the first World AIDS Day on December 1, 1988, treatment options for people living with HIV were practically nonexistent, and AIDS was almost invariably fatal. Hope was in short supply, and there seemed to be little reason for optimism. I am grateful that the world is a very different place for the 25th annual World AIDS Day."

- HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius

"Achieving an AIDS-free generation is a shared responsibility. Partnerships with host government, civil society, the faith community, the private sector, and multilateral organizations are vital to a robust and sustained global AIDS response. On this World AIDS Day, as we reflect on the extraordinary progress we have made together, it is important to remember that our work is far from finished."

- Secretary of State John Kerry

"There are countless of folks who are not here. My Rolodex, when there were days of Rolodexes, was full of folks who didn't make it. I still get calls from folks, from mothers, often, whose sons or daughters have just died from HIV and AIDS, and there's no reason in 2013 that I should still be getting those calls."

- Phill Wilson, founder of the Black AIDS Institute

BTL Editorial: Time To Rise Up

As we report today, the gay community cannot rely on state and federal prevention dollars to help end the infection trend. Government dollars come with strings, and public health authorities are, by nature, cautious in adopting new science - no matter how proven.

With another World AIDS Day as a marker, the statistics are clear. Men who have sex with men (MSM), including transgender women, are disproportionately infected and affected by HIV. And MSM communities of color have dramatically poorer outcomes involving later diagnosis and less access to medical care and life-extending drugs.

A list of prevention interventions continues to expand each year, yet access to those options remains limited. They are hampered by stigma and shame, or priced out of the market.

It is clear that once again, our community must rise up to the HIV crisis and confront it head on.

We owe it to those who fought so hard in the early years of the epidemic just to live.

We owe it to our youth, who have never known a world without HIV but deserve to see that world.

We owe it to each other because communities come together to face overwhelming obstacles and crisis.

We owe it to ourselves because we do not have to be burdened with spiraling HIV infections, crippling stigma about a virus or by bitter recriminations that shame queer sexuality and try to control it.

We believe that we are uniquely positioned right now, at the close of 2013, to dramatically and substantially rewrite the history of HIV in our community. We believe that with the tools within our grasp - from treatment as prevention to PrEP, to condoms, to sero-positioning and top-only risk reduction options - we can achieve an HIV free generation in one decade. Not just an AIDS free generation - a generation of proud MSM and transgender women who are living without HIV, period.

It is an ambitious goal, but it can be achieved. It will require difficult, uncomfortable conversations that affirm our sexualities and sexual activity in all their diversity.

"We have been avoiding the conversation because we are afraid to acknowledge that we're afraid of HIV; and it's been killing us," says Emily Dievendorf, managing director of Equality Michigan.

And she is right, of course.

But the avoidance ends today.

BTL urges LGBT organizations - nationally, statewide and locally - to pledge to facilitate community dialogs in order to develop our own testing and prevention messaging, separate from the shackles of government funding. BTL commits to help drive this conversation, and stands ready to assist in creating comprehensive plans from the community, by the community and for the community to end the HIV crisis.

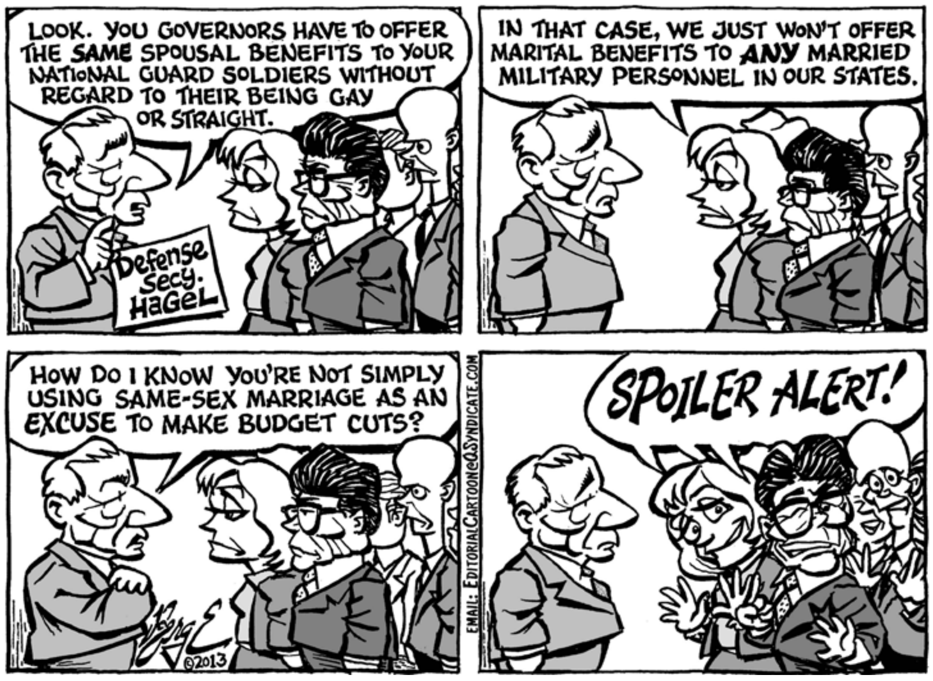
> BTL urges LGBT organizations - nationally, statewide and locally - to pledge to facilitate community dialogs in order to develop our own testing and prevention messaging, separate from the shackles of government funding.

Agenda Items

The dialogs need to do the following:

- Establish a clear timeline and plan for the local communities to address HIV using all the prevention technologies available.
- Must involve the state health department HAPIS division as listening partners only.
- Identification of all local organizations that can be brought in as partners including local public health, AIDS Service Organizations, other minority membership organizations and faith communities.
- Must engage local schools, K-12 through college, and address the lack of queer specific sexual health education.
- Must include explicit acknowledgement that condomless sex is, in fact, a healthy safer choice for some MSM and the continued shaming of condomless sex is harming our community.
- Findings, and step by step plans should be in place in localities by World AIDS Day 2014, one year from now.

These conversations, based on the local community needs as identified by that community, are key to stepping up to end HIV in Michigan's MSM community. We are ready - are you?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Nothing To Sneeze At

Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

In the popular book turned movie, "The Seven Percent Solution", Sherlock Holmes pays an unexpected visit to shrink Sigmund Freud for advice on how to break the detective's cocaine addiction.

While Holme's addiction was fiction, Freud's was factual.

Freud (1856 -1939), who invented guilt by free associating his patient's slips of the tongue and analyzing their dreams for sexual content, was an M.D. He used cocaine when the substance was considered a panacea for almost everything and readily available over the pharmaceutical counter.

Freud got his nasal and cocaine sniffing notions from a neurologist named Wilhelm Fliess, who dabbled in numerology, and believed that men have sexual cycles akin to women's menstrual periods. Fliess also coined the term "bisexual" and said that there is a link between the nose and gonads.

Rewiring the nasal passages – cocaine applications helped – can cure sexual short comings, he suggested. (Cautionary note: Don't try same in public.)

At first Freud was taken with Fliess – admitting to a bisexual crush of sorts – but soon was embarrassed by his colleague's psychological, gonadic post nasal drip. He dropped Fliess like yesterday's unscented Kleenex.

It didn't take Freud long to come to the alarming realization that cocaine use is highly addictive. Fortunately for Freud he was able to gradually wean himself off of cocaine.

(Alas, Sherlock Holmes continued unabated in his usage. His life partner Dr. Watson tolerantly nursed bourbon on the rocks.)

But Fliess was onto something.There is a connection for between the nose and the need for the giving or getting nookie. (Take the male silkworm. He can detect and follow 1/10,000th of a milligrams of the female scent up to seven miles away. Whether the trip is worth the flight time is another matter.)

The link between sex and smell was obvious in gay bars of the 1960s. Walk into any one of these aroma outbacks and it was an evening of the strength of my perfume vs. the stamina of your cologne. (Leather bars had other, shall we say lower, standards of odeur expectation.)

I still wear patchouli, which was once the gay man's scent-du-jour. It's inexpensive and smells like fresh laundry drying in the summer sun. (Or, something poetic like that.) Other popular scents were Polo, Canoe, Pepper, with tiny pebbles in the bottle. A few butch dykes wore Old Spice. Femmes, Evening in Paris.

Today the rage is pheromone spray. It's designed for male moths that are attracted to other male moths, usually found fluttering about the same busy, after-hours street lights.

(Scientists have discovered that the human nose can detect over 200 scents. Some LGBT. Yum!)

Thanksgiving I sprayed myself through three quarters of a $30 bottle of pheromones after dinner. I stood a lot. Smiled a lot. Moved about a lot. Nothing happened. I went home alone. Followed by an alley cat of unspecified gender and intentions. I awoke smelling like an unlaced gym shoe.

It seems everybody's olfactory organ had petered out on me.

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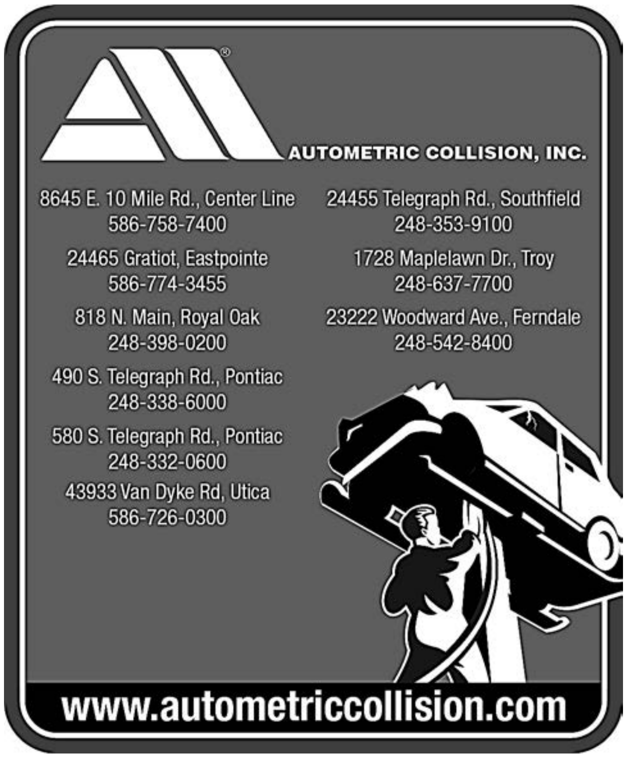

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What is STRIBILD?

STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. It combines 4 medicines into 1 pill to be taken once a day with food. STRIBILD is a complete single-tablet regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.

STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses you must keep taking STRIBILD. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?

STRIBILD can cause serious side effects:

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include feeling very weak or tired, unusual (not normal) muscle pain, trouble breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, feeling cold especially in your arms and legs, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Serious liver problems.** The liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and fatty (steatosis). Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice), dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored bowel movements (stools), loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and stop taking STRIBILD, your hepatitis may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health. STRIBILD is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take STRIBILD?

Do not take STRIBILD if you:

- **Take a medicine that contains:** alfuzosin, dihydroergotamine, ergotamine, methylergonovine, cisapride, lovastatin, simvastatin, pimozide, sildenafil when used for lung problems (Revatio®), triazolam, oral midazolam, rifampin or the herb St. John's wort.
- **For a list of brand names for these medicines,** please see the Brief Summary on the following pages.
- **Take any other medicines to treat HIV-1 infection,** or the medicine adefovir (Hepsera®).

What are the other possible side effects of STRIBILD?

Serious side effects of STRIBILD may also include:

- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do regular blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with STRIBILD. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD.
- **Bone problems,** including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV-1 medicines.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking STRIBILD.

The most common side effects of STRIBILD include nausea and diarrhea. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Do not start any new medicines while taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.
- **If you take hormone-based birth control** (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc).
- **If you take antacids.** Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk. Also, some medicines in STRIBILD can pass into breast milk, and it is not known if this can harm the baby.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information with **important warnings** on the following pages.

STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used as a complete single-tablet regimen to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.

I started my personal revolution

Talk to your healthcare provider about starting treatment.

STRIBILD is a complete HIV-1 treatment in **1 pill,** once a day.

Ask if it's right for you.

STRIBILD™

elvitegravir 150mg/ cobicistat 150mg/ emtricitabine 200mg/ tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300mg tablets

Patient Information

STRIBILD™ (STRY-bild)
(elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/ tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) tablets

Brief summary of full Prescribing Information. For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information, including Patient Information.

What is STRIBILD?

- **STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before.** STRIBILD is a complete regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.
- **STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.
- **Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.** Do not share or reuse needles, injection equipment, or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them. Do not have sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?

STRIBILD can cause serious side effects, including:

1. **Build-up of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take STRIBILD or similar (nucleoside analogs) medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**
    - feel very weak or tired
    - have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
    - have trouble breathing
    - have stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
    - feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
    - feel dizzy or lightheaded
    - have a fast or irregular heartbeat
2. **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take STRIBILD. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**
    - your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
    - dark "tea-colored" urine
    - light-colored bowel movements (stools)
    - loss of appetite for several days or longer
    - nausea
    - stomach pain

    You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time.
3. **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** If you have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and take STRIBILD, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking STRIBILD. A "flare-up" is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.
    - Do not run out of STRIBILD. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your STRIBILD is all gone
    - Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider
    - If you stop taking STRIBILD, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking STRIBILD

Who should not take STRIBILD?

Do not take STRIBILD if you also take a medicine that contains:

- adefovir (Hepsera®)
- alfuzosin hydrochloride (Uroxatral®)
- cisapride (Propulsid®, Propulsid Quicksolv®)
- ergot-containing medicines, including: dihydroergotamine mesylate (D.H.E. 45®, Migranal®), ergotamine tartrate (Cafergot®, Migergot®, Ergostat®, Medihaler Ergotamine®, Wigraine®, Wigrettes®), and methylergonovine maleate (Ergotrate®, Methergine®)
- lovastatin (Advicor®, Altoprev®, Mevacor®)
- oral midazolam
- pimozide (Orap®)
- rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifamate®, Rifater®, Rimactane®)
- sildenafil (Revatio®), when used for treating lung problems
- simvastatin (Simcor®, Vytorin®, Zocor®)
- triazolam (Halcion®)
- the herb St. John's wort

Do not take STRIBILD if you also take any other HIV-1 medicines, including:

- Other medicines that contain tenofovir (Atripla®, Complera®, Viread®, Truvada®)
- Other medicines that contain emtricitabine, lamivudine, or ritonavir (Combivir®, Emtriva®, Epivir® or Epivir-HBV®, Epzicom®, Kaletra®, Norvir®, Trizivir®)

STRIBILD is not for use in people who are less than 18 years old.

What are the possible side effects of STRIBILD?

STRIBILD may cause the following serious side effects:

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?"**
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before you start and while you are taking STRIBILD. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take STRIBILD. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

The most common side effects of STRIBILD include:

- Nausea
- Diarrhea

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

- These are not all the possible side effects of STRIBILD. For more information, ask your healthcare provider.
- Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including:

- If you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis B infection
- If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
  - There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- If you are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take STRIBILD.
  - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
  - Two of the medicines in STRIBILD can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in STRIBILD can pass into your breast milk.
  - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements:

- STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works.
- Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following medicines:
  - Hormone-based birth control (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc)
  - Antacid medicines that contains aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD
  - Medicines to treat depression, organ transplant rejection, or high blood pressure
  - amiodarone (Cordarone®, Pacerone®)
  - atorvastatin (Lipitor®, Caduet®)
  - bepridil hydrochloric (Vascor®, Bepadin®)
  - bosentan (Tracleer®)
  - buspirone
  - carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegreto®)
  - clarithromycin (Biaxin®, Prevpac®)
  - clonazepam (Klonopin®)
  - clorazepate (Gen-xene®, Tranxene®)
  - colchicine (Colcrys®)
  - medicines that contain dexamethasone
  - diazepam (Valium®)
  - digoxin (Lanoxin®)
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This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about STRIBILD. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about STRIBILD that is written for health professionals, or call 1-800-445-3235 or go to www.STRIBILD.com.

Issued: August 2012

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Meet State Rep. Candidate Jeremy Moss

ELECTION 2014

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMRIE

Jeremy Moss is the youngest elected official in the City of Southfield, having been elected to council at age 25. Now he's taking on the race for State Representative in District 35, which includes Southfield, Lathrup Village, Bingham Farms and Franklin. His website is http://votejeremymoss.com.

1 Why did you decide to run for State Representative?

I have the experience, unmatched, to be effective on day one in Lansing. I first walked into Room 799 in the House Office Building in August 2005 as an intern at MSU, as a sophomore to begin what I thought was a one semester internship working for Paul Condino. I returned as District Director for Rudy Hobbs in January 2011 after serving as his successful campaign manager. Term-limits take out some of that institutional experience that help laws get passed, but because I've already been there, I have the experience to be ready on day one.

One of most important experiences I've had is serving on Southfield City Council. I know how money flows from the state to the communities. We've lost $6 billion in revenue to cities in the last ten years. I know the impact this has and I want to be a voice for local communities.

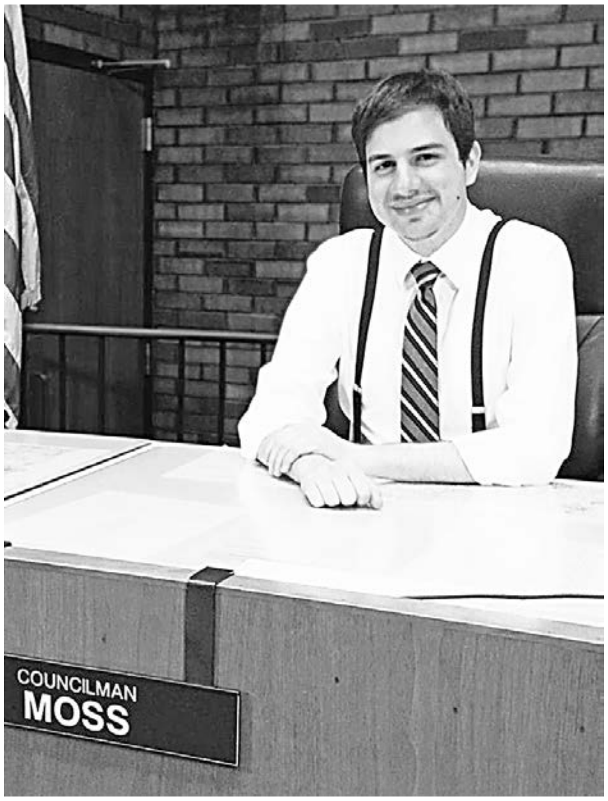
2 What do you feel are the biggest issues facing our state?

Down economy that hasn't picked up as quickly as it should have. Consecutive months of rising unemployment. Taxing seniors pensions at the expense of tax breaks to corporation. The slashing of revenue sharing that hurts us back home.

Here's very clear example. In Southfield we have two pots for road funding – local roads and major roads. What we used to do is take oldest neighborhood in Southfield that hadn't had resurfacing and re-do it. This is how we kept the city up. This year we had $0 for local roads. That is the direct result of cuts in Lansing. Those kinds of cuts affect quality of life the most, and we need people who understand that. Certain areas get neglected, like local communities and local infrastructure.

3 Do you have any special projects or legislation that you want to work on?

Bringing revenue back to our cities. It's such a nonpartisan issue. There are former Republican mayors serving in the legislature. There are former Democratic Mayors. And they get it. And we will find a way to work together. Our cities aren't getting support and it affects our quality of life, and our libraries, and our schools.



4 Who do you think is your toughest competition so far?

I'm in a very good position to be a front-runner in this race. Mykale "Kelly" Garrett is on Lathrup Village City Council. She was running for Congressional Seat and dropped out of that race to run in this one instead. This will be a Democratic Seat and I'll face her in the primary.

I've positioned myself very nicely to be competition.

I'll win by going door to door. When I was elected to city council there was an uphill battle. There were three incumbents and a former councilmember running for her seat back. Plus eight other challengers. I grew up in Southfield and have been a lifelong Southfield resident. I placed first, I think because I was able to go to their doorstep. I went to the voters and listened to their concerns.

Southfield is the base of the district. Eight out of 10 primary voters will be from Southfield. When Rudy Hobbs first won for State Representative, he got 5,700 votes. When I was elected to City Council I got 5,500. I know how to get people to come out and vote.

I enjoy campaigning a lot because you get to meet people and you really get to hear their concerns. It made me a better candidate to be able to listen, not just tell people what issues they should care about.

5 Do you have any specific LGBT issue you hope to work on?

I joined LEAD – local officials all across the state calling to amend Elliott Larson Act. And we're working to push this in Southfield next year.

Michigan is changing so quickly. I wouldn't be so surprised that under my tenure in Lansing, that Michigan can be the next state for marriage equality.

But there are struggles. Other states don't have such a clear ban. I will fight to make sure in the next six years Michigan will have marriage equality. We have to start with the Elliott Larson Act. You can be kicked out of your housing or fired from your job just for being perceived as being gay. We can't piecemeal protection together. We need protection for everyone in the state.

6 Has the fact that you are gay affected your interest in politics, or the way people in the political world have treated you?

No, vice versa. I have been interested in politics as long as I can remember. In the summer between kindergarten and 1st grade my family took me on vacation to DC because I was already interested. Regardless of my sexual orientation I would have been in the same spot where I am.

LGBT issues have come to the forefront at warp speed. So many struggles people like me won't have to experience firsthand because previous generations saw them. There was a time right when I graduated college, and I was nervous being out, worried how would this affect my political career. But now that our issues are being more accepted into the American story it just hasn't been a big deal.

The voters I represent care first and foremost that I come from their community and I know their issues. I am not a one dimensional candidate. It's a piece of me but it's not a driving factor.

> *"The voters I represent care first and foremost that I come from their community and I know their issues. I am not a one dimensional candidate. (Being gay) is a piece of me but it's not a driving factor."*

7 Your age also makes you unique in the political world. Why do you think there aren't more young people in politics and what makes you so drawn to it?

I was elected at age 25, the youngest official in Southfield history. The oldest member on council is 93.

When I was going door to door I thought how am I going to frame my biography to highlight my experience? My biggest hurdle was my biggest asset. People are sick of the same people doing things the same way. They appreciate having a millennial with energy and ideas.

8 Who has inspired you most in your political career?

My two biggest mentors are Brenda Lawerence and Rudy Hobbs. I met both when I was 18 years old. Brenda is like a political mother and Rudy has been like a political brother. You don't govern from the top down, you govern from the bottom up. Running his campaign and working in his office, I learned that when you're in the minority, there' s not much you can do in terms of legislation, so he decided to be a model for constituent services – helping people navigate government, connecting people with utility companies or agencies or whatever people who called needed. Basically, getting things done.

He made sure that he wasn't just going up to Lansing and pushing a yes or no button and going home. He was representing the people and taking care of their concerns.

9 Anything else we should let readers know?

It's gonna be a good 2014. I think we have the capacity to take back the House for the Democrats, to make sure that the one party rule of extremists in Lansing comes to an end. We have great candidates in Mark Schauer and Gary Peters. This is the strongest ticket statewide we've put up in my short lifetime so far. I'm excited for the opportunity to represent this district.

For more information, to volunteer or to donate, go to www.votejeremymoss.com

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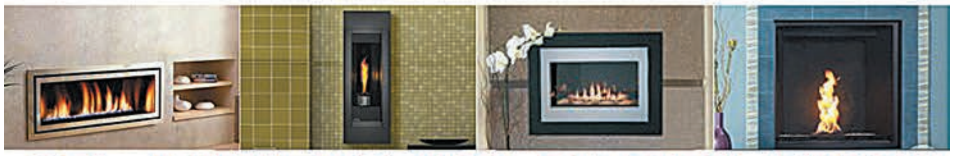

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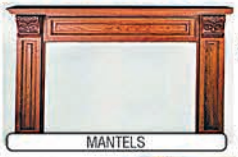
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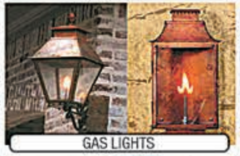
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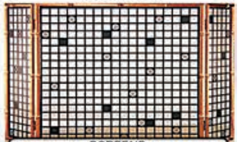
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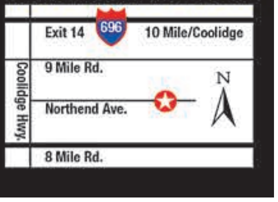

US Court Reviews Gay Russian's Asylum Case

BY SUDHIN THANAWALA

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - A U.S. appeals court has ordered immigration officials to review their decision not to grant asylum to a gay man who said he was attacked for his sexual orientation in 2002 and 2003 in his native Russia and feared he would be persecuted if forced to return there.

The Department of Justice's Board of Immigration Appeals was wrong when it concluded that the man had failed to show that government officials in Russia were either unwilling or unable to control his attackers, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Nov. 27.

The man was only identified as "John Doe" in the opinion.

"The government failed to present any evidence to rebut Doe's undisputed testimony that he suffered serious assaults at the hands of individuals on account of his homosexuality or to show that the Russian government was able and willing to control non-governmental actors who attack homosexuals," the court said.

It ordered the board to review the case and said federal officials had to show circumstances had changed in Russia to allay the man's fears, or that he could be relocated to a safe area in the country.

A call and email to the Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review was not immediately returned on Nov.27. Government offices were closed for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Someone who answered the phone at the Russian Embassy in Washington said the embassy was also closed. Emails to the Russian Consulate in San Francisco were not immediately returned.

The ruling comes after Russian lawmakers passed a law this summer banning gay "propaganda," prompting some activists to call for a boycott of the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi. President Vladimir Putin has said the law won't infringe on the rights of gays, and athletes and activists will not be punished if they raise rainbow flags or have rainbow-colored fingernails.

The man seeking asylum in the 9th Circuit case said he was beaten and kicked while walking in a park with his partner in September 2002, according to court records. He had joined a club for gays that year at the age of 18 while he was in his first year of college in the city of Ulan-Ude, and said his five attackers included classmates.

When he filed a complaint naming his attackers, police said his injuries were not serious and asked why he had not defended himself, according to court records.

The second attack occurred in April 2003 when he was at a restaurant with his partner. He was knocked unconscious and suffered a concussion. In that case, he said law enforcement officials rejected the case, citing a Russian regulation.

He moved to the United States in November 2003 to attend an English language school. Federal officials initiated removal proceedings against him two years later on the grounds that he violated the conditions of his stay when he stopped attending school.

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Russian Activists Urge IOC Head On Gay Rights

PARIS (AP) - IOC President Thomas Bach has met with Russian gay rights activists who urged an investigation ahead of the Sochi Olympics into national laws banning "gay propaganda."

International gay rights group AllOut said Russian campaigners asked Bach in Paris on Saturday "to launch an independent investigation on the legal implications of the anti-gay laws in effect in Russia during the Olympic Games."

"A list of precise questions about the implication of the anti-gay laws, to help frame the investigation, were submitted and received by the IOC president," AllOut said in a statement. "The IOC will announce later whether or not the investigation will be done."

The International Olympic Committee and its sponsors have been pressed to take a stronger position against Russia after President Vladimir Putin signed off a law in June banning promotion of "nontraditional sexual relations" to minors.

"The IOC must call for an end to the discriminatory laws and ensure that the Olympics never again take place in a city where athletes are silenced because of who they are or who they love," AllOut executive director Andre Banks said.

The IOC has previously said Moscow assured that athletes and spectators will not face discrimination at the Feb. 7-23 Winter Games.

The IOC issued a statement on Saturday noting Bach's meeting with France President Francois Hollande at the Elysee Palace, though did not refer directly to the issue of gay rights.

"The pair discussed the upcoming Olympic Winter Games in Sochi and expectations for the French athletes, France's commitment to the fight against doping and illegal betting in sport, and sports development in France," the IOC said. "The French president discussed a potential Olympic bid for 2024."

Gay Weddings Become Reality In Hawaii

BY OSKAR GARCIA

HONOLULU (AP) – Same-sex couples are taking advantage of Hawaii's newfound aloha for gay weddings.

Six couples at a Waikiki resort tied the knot early Monday, exchanging vows side-by-side with one another in front of a few hundred guests shortly after midnight, while even more couples watched and waited their turn.

Across town, an openly gay Unitarian minister wed his partner of 15 years in a ceremony attended by clergy who pushed for the new law, plus Gov. Neil Abercrombie, who called the special legislative session that led to the law.

“One hundred percent tuned (out) everything else but her,” Saralyn Morales said moments after cutting a small wedding cake after marrying her partner, Isajah Morales. “It's about making that commitment to the person that I want to spend the rest of my life with.”

Hawaii's marriage laws allow couples to register for a license and be married the same day, a process conducive for tourists only in the state a short time.

Couples can sign up for a license online then be verified by any license agent throughout the state. Agents have set up shop throughout the islands, from resorts on Maui and the Big Island to hard-to-reach places on Kauai.

Saralyn and Isajah Morales began filling out license applications a few minutes after midnight along with other couples. Several license agents huddled around four laptops in a tiny conference room, refreshing their web browsers to coax a state-run website to load. A few feet away, wedding guests sipped champagne, dined on curried shrimp and portabella mushroom sliders, listened to piano music and took pictures with each of seven cakes on display for the occasion.

Couples who walked in to register on the spot posed with a three-tiered centerpiece cake, adorned with pink and white roses.

“Next!” Keola Akana exclaimed after being the first of the group to complete the license application with his groom, Ethan Wung.

Akana said he and Wung were getting married after entering into a civil union last year so they could receive federal benefits.

Ethan Wung, left, and Keola Akana will be among the first same-sex couples to be legally married in Hawaii on Dec. 2. AP Photo: Jennifer Sinco Kelleher

“Got dinged on taxes last year because we're not legally married federally, and we will be married for taxes this year,” Akana said. “Now we're equal to everybody in Hawaii that's married, everybody in the nation and the world that's legally married, so that's an honor.”

One of the organizers, Honolulu Pride Chairman Michael Golojuch Jr., said early Monday that more than three dozen couples had signed up to wed.

“It's just exciting and historic and we wanted to be a part of it,” Maria Gallo, a Honolulu resident who planned to marry her partner, Beth Creary, said Sunday, several hours before standing in line for a license agent at the resort.

“This is like a confirmation with a group of people here who are sharing our joy,” she said.

For those wanting to get licenses in person, Hawaii's Health Department planned to open its doors at 8 a.m. Monday.

“We started this battle 23 years ago and we get to finish it tonight,” Golojuch Jr. said.

Hawaii is often credited with starting the national gay marriage discussion, when couples applying for a marriage license led to a court fight that eventually helped prompt Congress to pass the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996. Part of the law was struck down earlier this year by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Golojuch said the weddings will touch Hawaii in a good way and that businesses have begun to think about how to embrace the gay community.

“They opened up their doors to us, their hearts to us,” Golojuch said. “That's what we're seeing with a lot of the business community that understands that $217 million is what our economy needs to keep on going.”

An estimate from a University of Hawaii researcher says the state will get a $217 million tourism boost over the next three years as a result of gay marriage.

Hawaii's Legislature - overwhelmingly composed of Democrats - passed the law last month during a special session. Abercrombie called for the special session after the U.S. Supreme Court rulings.

Cardinal: Catholics ‘Outmarketed’ On Gay Marriage

NEW YORK (AP) – New York’s Cardinal Timothy Dolan says the Roman Catholic Church has been “outmarketed” on the issue of gay marriage and has been “caricatured as being anti-gay.”

Dolan discussed the church’s positions opposing same-sex marriage and abortion in an interview that aired Sunday on NBC.

Illinois just became the latest U.S. state to legalize gay marriage. When asked whether the practice ultimately will be legal everywhere, Dolan replied: “I think I’d be a Pollyanna to say that there doesn’t seem to be kind of a stampede to do this. I regret that.”

Dolan said the church supports “traditional marriage and is not “anti-anybody,” adding, “When you have forces like Hollywood, when you have forces like politicians, when you have forces like some opinion-molders that are behind it, it’s a tough battle.”

But he said the church will not give up on the gay marriage issue.

On another divisive issue, Dolan said the Catholic Church has long championed comprehensive health care, but he said U.S. Catholic bishops cannot support the sweeping new health care law known as the Affordable Care Act as long as it includes coverage for abortion.

He said the bishops started “bristling” at the legislation pushed by President Barack Obama because “it’s excluding the undocumented immigrant and it’s excluding the unborn baby.”

Creep of the Week

Cardinal Timothy Dolan

OPINION BY D’ANNE WITKOWSKI

What’s more powerful, Hollywood and Washington D.C. or God?

If you don’t believe in God, that’s easy: Hollywood and D.C., because, duh, they are populated by actual people. But if you believe in God, surely you think He has more sway than the cities that brought us Brokeback Mountain and Barney Frank, right?

Maybe not, it turns out. At least when the issue at hand is marriage equality.

On Friday, Nov. 29 Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, had a heart to heart with David Gregory. The topic turned to all those gays getting married and Gregory wondered what Dolan thought about the rapid advances equality has made in recent months.

“I’d be a Pollyanna to say that there doesn’t seem to be kind of a stampede to [legalize same-sex marriage],” Dolan responded. “I regret that, I wish that were not the case.”

> People like Dolan will keep up the fight to turn back the clock to a time when our families were considered a crime and an abomination.

Nice use of the word “stampede,” by the way. It brings to mind an image of gay and lesbian couples mowing down everybody in between them and legal marriage. As if the fight for marriage equality is akin to Walmart on Black Friday with folks stomping on each other’s heads to get a discount flat screen.

David Gregory then asked, “But why do you think the church is losing the argument on it, in effect?”

Note that Gregory did not ask Dolan if the church is losing the argument. He flat out said, “Dude, the church is losing this shit, what gives?”

Dolan’s answer is quite revelatory.

“Well, I think maybe we’ve been out-marketed, sometimes,” he said. “I don’t know, when you have forces like Hollywood, when you have forces like politicians, when you have forces like some opinion-molders that are behind it, it’s a tough battle.”

First of all, out-marketed? This isn’t Coke v. Pepsi, pal.

Secondly, did he just say that the forces of “Hollywood” and “politicians” are beating out the force of the Catholic Church? That God’s condemnation of homosexuality is no match for a bunch of celebrities and senators? Why, yes. Yes he did.

And for what injustice are Hollywood and Washington D.C. at fault? “We’ve been caricatured as being anti-gay,” Dolan said.

Oh, now that’s rich, especially coming from a man who personally lobbied against marriage equality in New York and who once included homosexuality in a list of “contemporary threats to marriage” including “polygamy, adultery, [and] forced marriages.” As if there’s some giant conspiracy to make the Catholic Church seem like it doesn’t like gays. Because they sure don’t make any secret about their anti-gay lifestyle.

Dolan likened the fight against marriage equality to the fight against abortion.

“Back in 1973 with Roe v. Wade, everybody said this is a forgone conclusion, in a couple of years this issue is going to go away” he said. “To this day it remains probably the most divisive issue in American politics.”

Gregory asked, “So you don’t think the gay marriage debate is over?”

“No. I don’t think it is,” Dolan responded.

In other words, lesbians and gays may be winning the battle to have our families recognized as legal and loving, but people like Dolan will keep up the fight to turn back the clock to a time when our families were considered a crime and an abomination.

BRIEFS

Ruth Ellis Bio-pic To Be Screened At REC

DETROIT – Kofi Adoma, a close friend of Ruth Ellis in her later years, grew to appreciate just how extraordinary Ellis' life had been as an out, black lesbian in Detroit. Long before there were community centers, youth support groups or PFLAG chapters, Ellis, who died in 2000 at the age of 101, had opened her home to young LGBT people, welcoming them into her extended family of friends and loved ones.

When Adoma became one of the co-founding board members of the Ruth Ellis Center, she turned to her longtime heroine for permission to name it in her honor. "When I asked Mother Ruth if we could name the center after her, she was gracious and willing to do so because she understood the pain and the need to provide safe space, as she did when she and her partner donated their few meager dollars to young people's education back in the 40's and 50's in their home in Detroit. She cared. I care. You care," said Adoma.

An award-winning bio-pic chronicling Ellis' life, Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100, will be screened Dec. 14 at 1 p.m., followed by a panel discussion led by Adoma. The event will be at the Ruth Ellis Center, 77 Victor in Highland Park in the Second Stories drop-in center on the second floor. There will be secured parking in the lot and on the street.

There is no charge, but donations to REC will be accepted in any amount. For more info go to www.ruthelliscenter.org or call 313-252-1950

Gala 'Kicks' Off The Season

DETROIT – Kick, the agency for LGBT African Americans, will host the 11th annual Holiday In December Gala Fundraiser Dec. 14. With suggested dress colors of elegant black and cranberry, this holiday dinner event starts at 6 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Detroit in the Albert Kahn Hall, 33 East Ferry St. Detroit. Tickets are $75 and available at www.e-kick.org or 313-285-9733.

DTMC Christmas Concert Dec. 14

Detroit Together Men's Chorus presents O Soulful Night, 7:30 Dec. 14 at Lamphere High School Auditorium, 690 W. Thirteen Mile Rd., Madison Hts. Tickets are $25 and $18 at Just 4 Us and Five 15 or on www.familylobby.com/dtmc.

Detroit Art Scene Shines Bright Every 3rd Thursday

Over 60 venues extend hours, break down barriers

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

DETROIT - When a handful of Detroit gallery owners and Art Detroit Now came together to brainstorm, a monthly art event known as 3rd Thursday was the result.

The goal is to showcase Detroit's expanding art scene and connect the diverse art community and businesses among the city neighborhoods, according to Art Detroit Now, an organization formed in 2006 by 11 leading members in Detroit's contemporary arts community.

"We want to get people out to these galleries, and really take down the barriers between the Detroit neighborhoods and art venues to come out and experience the richness of our art scene and engage in what is happening here, on a regular basis in an assessable way," said Milana Duthie, managing director of Art Detroit Now. "It really gives galleries a way to experiment with things like one-night shows, and it gives people the opportunity to visit many different galleries in one evening with a synchronized schedule of events every month."

"We've talked about doing all kinds of fun things in future months, like having musical entertainment or book signings - all different kinds of things to go along with the shows that we have up," said Nancy Sizer, Director of the Detroit Artists Market, who is on the planning team for Art Detroit Now. The organization also includes the College for Creative Studies, Cranbrook, Detroit Institute of Arts, N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, MOCAD, Oakland University and Wayne State University.

Connecting Neighborhoods

Duthie noted that neighborhoods such as Downtown, Midtown, Eastern Market, North End, and Corktown are thought of as being separate. "But when thinking about them on an urban geographic scale, these communities are so close. One Thursday evening can make a difference, as it offers that additional window of time to encounter that great art experience people cannot fit into their already busy weekend schedules."

The event, which started in Feb. 2012 on the third Thursday of every month, extends the hours of more than 45 participating venues until 9 p.m. for special programming, shows, and offerings. This includes fall new comers like Ellen Kayrod Gallery, Spread Art @detroit contemporary, and Sugar Hill Clay Studios. Besides galleries, small and specialized boutiques, artist studios, café's and coffee shops participate to support and cross-promote one another. The number of attendees, Duthie said, has grown steadily from approximately 400 to about 1000.

3RD THURSDAYS

For a list of participating locations and for more information, visit artdetroitnow.com, and their Facebook and Twitter pages for regular posts and updates.

>> artdetroitnow.com

> "*To me, Detroit is an art city, besides many other great things. Art lives and breathes in our work, our personal lives, our cities' buildings, our schools and our homes, as well as the history of the city and its people. I feel that 3rd Thursday is casual enough that it attracts artists and non-artists alike and that is a great thing,*"
>
> \- Erik Garant, Operations Director at
> 555 Nonprofit Gallery and Studio

For Whitdel Arts on 1250 Hubbard St. in Detroit, 3rd Thursdays has been quite successful, according to JenClare Gawaran, President and Board of Directors at the gallery.

"It can be a bit more difficult to get people over to Southwest Detroit, where the cluster of galleries isn't so centralized. We usually have limited open gallery hours every week. On 3rd Thursday, we've found that a good amount of people will come in to see the exhibitions. For us, the number can range between 12 to 20 people. It may not sound like much, but we consider that a positive turnout and expect that number to increase as people continue to be familiar with the whole 3rd Thursday programming," she said.

The events held at Whitdel Arts are focused on topics and information they feel active artists should know. "Many of us here are artists ourselves, so we understand the importance of having regular critiques, as well as workshops to further your skills in the studio or helpful advice about your artistic career."

"An event like this is a great opportunity for Detroiters to see Detroit art as well as experience the swell of community cohesiveness that is growing and thriving all throughout Detroit," said Erik Garant, Operations Director at 555 Nonprofit Gallery and Studios on 2801 W. Vernor Hwy in Detroit.

"To me, Detroit is an art city, besides many other great things. Art lives and breathes in our work, our personal lives, our cities' buildings, our schools and our homes, as well as the history of the city and its people. I feel that 3rd Thursday is casual enough that it attracts artists and non-artists alike and that is a great thing," said Garant. "All and all, I truly feel that it's crucial to participate in order to create bridges and fill the gaps that sometimes exist from community to community, gallery to gallery and even artist to artist."

Duthie said, "Every month, new and interesting offerings and events will take place so no 3rd Thursday is similar."

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DISCO DABBLER

Frontman Brendon Urie On Hot Dudes, Bisexuality & Being Naked

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

After years of speculation, Brendon Urie is coming out as ... "a straight dabbler"? Panic! at the Disco's glam frontman, who celebrates bisexuality on the band's single "Girls/Girls/Boys" from their fourth LP "Too Weird to Live, Too Rare to Die!," opens up in our recent chat about his curious past with men and finding himself "attracted to dudes all the time." Catch Urie and the rest of Panic! at the Disco when they perform at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 12 at The Fillmore in Detroit as part of the 89X Nutcracker.

What inspired "Girls/Girls/Boys"?

Like every song on this record, the song is very autobiographical. Just very honest and very confessional about exactly how I feel. The biggest summarization of the whole song in general is in the lyric "Love is not a choice," which I completely believe.

I'm proud of who I am and I'm gonna act accordingly. It's really kind of loosely based on the majority of relationships I've been in, even now with my wife. Yeah, she's attracted to girls, and I think some men are extremely attractive and I don't wanna hide it. I have no shame in it. I like being able to shed some light on that. It's nice to be able to open up like that.

You basically answered my next question: Was this song inspired by a relationship with a bisexual woman?

(Laughs) It was! I've been in these scenarios and I just find that attractive. Maybe not just the bisexuality, but the openness and the honesty that one can accomplish by just knowing, "This is me, this is who I am." It's so attractive to have that kind of confidence.

INFO

89X Nutcracker with Panic! at the Disco

6:30 p.m. Dec. 12
The Fillmore
2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit
thefillmoredetroit.com

Would you call the song a bisexual anthem?

I mean, that's a bold statement, but I'd be honored to call it a bisexual anthem – that's kind of awesome. I feel like (bisexuality) needs to be celebrated, because a lot of times I feel like people are ashamed and they hide it and they might be a little scared to open up about it. Being able to do that is a big step for me.

Gay rumors about you have been circulating since the beginning of your career. And last year you tweeted, "Everyone's a little gay." Do you truly believe that for yourself and for other people?

Oh yeah, definitely. It's natural. I find myself being attracted to dudes all the time. I'm like, "Wow, that's a beautiful man." There's no shame in it; that's how I feel. To stifle that would probably bring on stress and probably make somebody homophobic.

How do you label yourself sexually, then?

I guess if I had to classify myself, I'd say I'm straight. But I have, in the past, experimented in other realms of homosexuality and bisexuality. Overall I'm more attracted to women. Like with my wife, I'm just so insanely in love and attracted to my wife that I go, "Well, OK, my love of musicals can't trump that I love pussy." (Laughs)

A straight dabbler?

Yeah, sure. It's fun to dabble!

What's it about D'Angelo's music video for "Untitled (How Does It Feel)" that made you want to pay tribute to it in the "Girls/Girls/Boys" video?

When I first saw that video, I was pretty young – I think I was 12 years old – but I don't even know if it was something sexual. At that point I was just more mesmerized by how bold it was. I was like, "This guy is so confident that he has no problem being naked." I did like his pants and how low they'd go. It got real close to seeing his junk. Something about it was so open and so just naked ... not just physically but figuratively. He's really opening himself up to be that comfortable in front of the camera. This song was such a vulnerable song that I felt it just made sense to do something like that.

Are you as comfortable with being naked as you look in the video?

Oh yeah. Right now I'm naked. I'm naked all the time. If I'm home, I'm naked. (Laughs)

So you're at home now?

No ... I'm walking through a grocery store, totally naked. (Laughs)

How aware are you that both women and men are swooning over this video? Are you getting salacious tweets? How does your wife feel about all this?

(Laughs) I've gotten a couple. My wife was on set, actually. She was helping to oil me up! My wife is the coolest. She's so down to let me do whatever crazy thing pops in my head. It's kind of amazing.

But I've gotten tweets from fans, and it's flattering. They're like, "Your video is so hot." I'm just a skinny white dude. I'm not built. I'm not some supermodel dude. I'm just a normal dude. And I feel it's flattering in a way, and also surprising – you think it's sexy? Really? I was just spoofing a video that I really love, but it's nice to get some good feedback.

Thank your wife for me please.

(Laughs) I thank her every day.

You guys are known for putting on a pretty gay show. It's been about 10 years since you referred to your former bandmate Ryan Ross as your lover and chased him across the stage, trying to kiss him. What's gay about the latest show?

We have this thing we call "stage gay" where I become a different person on stage. I think I can say the same for the rest of the band: We become just a character, a different person on stage, and you treat every situation accordingly. So you get close to somebody on stage and there's sexual tension and you're all of a sudden this cocky person running around on stage. I like to bring that person to the character I play on stage.

It's also just very flamboyant. Our costumes are pretty amazing. Some very flamboyant, shiny, sparkly clothing. I have a pinkish, rose-gold jacket that's my favorite thing ever. I gotta gay it up a bit.

What about the heavy eye makeup? When's that making a comeback?

I miss the makeup, actually. I've been looking at ideas in the past couple of months to not replicate what we've done in the past but to do something new and different, because I do miss wearing the makeup.

You've always prided yourself on being pretty odd. What do you find so weird about yourself?

I always roll paper, which is a weird thing. I mean, I can roll a really good joint ... but all day I'm just rolling bits of paper. My wife is impressed by it. She's like, "Wow, these are perfectly rolled pieces of paper. Tightly packaged like a toothpick."

Maybe you have a second career in origami.

(Laughs) Maybe! I should look into that.

What's on your iPod that would surprise people?

Let's see what I have here. This might actually surprise *me*. We've got Ace of Base. Gotta have Ace of Base. Here's a funny one: OMC's "How Bizarre." I have weird one-hit wonders from the '90s. Oh, and I've got Aqua. Definitely got Aqua.

And show tunes, right?

I have a whole folder! I've got "Li'l Abner" and "Cabaret." I have "The Sound of Music"!

What accounts for the shift in sound on "Too Weird to Live, Too Rare to Die!," an album that meanders from your theatrical flourishes as of late and goes electro-pop?

I was spending a good amount of time going to clubs and just watching people dance – things I really never did in the past – and going to Vegas, where I grew up, and just spending time at nightclubs. Basically not being the cynical hipster with the beer in the corner and actually joining in and being one of the people that I would've made fun of in the past. It's liberating in a way. I wanted to make a record like that. I wanted to make a party record. One that got me excited. One that I felt could excite people to get up and dance – and dance like no one's watching. And to celebrate life.

What inspired the nod to Janet Jackson with the "are you nasty?" line on the song "Miss Jackson"?

A lot of times my samples are stolen from a place of admiration. With the "Miss Jackson" line, I was watching Janet Jackson's "Nasty" and, when she gets out of that car and says that line, I'm just like, "Ahh, it's so good!" I don't know why I love it so much, but I love it. I just started having the best time dancing around, singing that.

You were naked when this all went down, weren't you?

Chances are that yes, I was naked. (Laughs)

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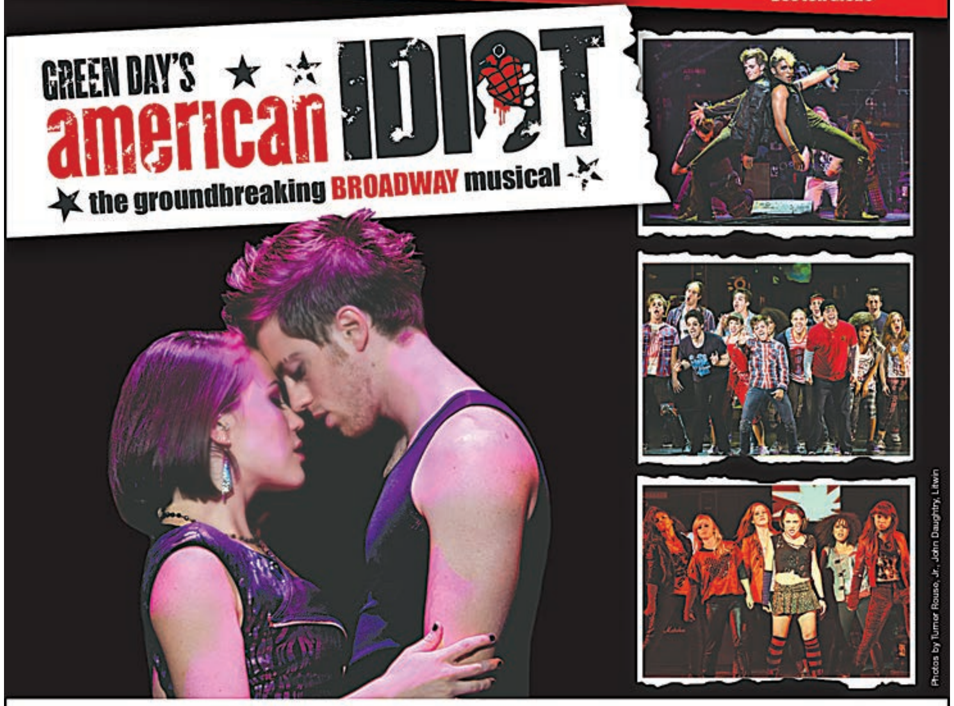

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Hear Me Out ... For The Holidays

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Kelly Clarkson wrapped in Red

Kelly Clarkson, 'Wrapped in Red'

In 1963, background-singer-turned-soloist Darlene Love got with big-time producer Phil Spector to turn out the December perennial "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)." Love was in a class all by herself, singing that song with so much emotion, her baby better have got his butt back to her. Even today, few have that soul, that range ... that thing that Kelly Clarkson has. The songstress, on her first Christmas release, seems to have enjoyed those Spector sessions as much as everyone else – "Wrapped in Red" follows in their footsteps. It's to its benefit that the title track, a bouncy throwback boosted by Clarkson's mighty boom, sounds like a song you've heard before. With a nostalgic Love-inspired performance, it could have been released a half century ago. "Underneath the Tree," basking in the glow of Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You," has the fixings of a classic too: the jazzy big-band feel, those chiming sleigh bells, a sax solo – all that, and Clarkson's cheery vocal, crystallizes into an invigorating burst of holiday happiness that even the Grinch couldn't pass up. And the brassy number "Every Christmas" – a lovesick heartbreaker also co-written by Clarkson, her voice carrying the song into the starry night – is another welcome addition to the Christmastime tradition. Takes on "Silent Night," with Trisha Yearwood and Reba McEntire, and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" are – in Clarkson's vintage style – gifts under the tree, wrapped in red, just waiting to be opened. *Grade: B+*

A MARY CHRISTMAS
MARY J BLIGE

Mary J. Blige, 'A Mary Christmas'

Fifteen years ago, before the soul diva was crying out for "no more drama," a Mary J. Blige album of all Christmas carols would have spread less cheer and more tears. I mean, she'd have your face in a pillow of giant sad tears with a cover of Mariah's "Miss You Most (at Christmas Time)," and don't even get me started on Amy Grant's "Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)," a song so Mary J. it has her name right in the title. But no, Blige and producer David Foster ain't going down that chimney. Though always in impeccable vocal form, this is all fairly standard stuff: No one needs to hear the Queen of Hip-Hop Soul "pa-rum-pum-pum-pum"-ing on "Little Drummer Boy," and "This Christmas" doesn't go anywhere that it hasn't already been. Surprisingly, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" – a song that should be beneath someone of Blige's singing stature – builds into a cool big-band number with Mary letting loose, playfully scatting over the bass-driven jazziness. Blige has never recorded an album this not-urban, and her shift into full-fledged adult-contemporary includes "When You Wish Upon a Star," with Barbra Streisand, and "My Favorite Things," so orchestra-propelled you expect Blige's next career move to be Broadway. It's certainly festive, but all of it, albeit a glorious recording of the 1945 French song "Petit Papa Noël," is just ... fine. "A Mary Christmas," an ornament hanging low when it could've been the star on top of the tree, would've been more successful if Blige was as distraught and dramatic as she looks on the cover. *Grade: C+*

Also Out

ERASURE
Snow Globe

Erasure, 'Snow Globe'

You know that Erasure Christmas album you've been waiting for? No? Yeah, that's because no one could have predicted that the '80s synth-pop duo would get in on the yuletide action. And yet here it is, in all its fantastically original and out-there glory. Not just giving electro life to standards like "White Christmas" and a truly lovely "Bleak Midwinter," Andy Bell and Vince Clarke also cut five new songs for the album, including bittersweet "Make It Wonderful" and the hopeful prayer "Bells of Love (Isabelle's of Love)." It's no Christmas miracle that Erasure's surprising venture into the merry-time market is a remarkable standout. This is just what talent sounds like.

MATTHEW MORRISON
A CLASSIC CHRISTMAS

Matthew Morrison, 'A Classic Christmas'

It's too bad Matthew Morrison still can't settle on a sound that's all his own. Had he, the covers on this humdrum holiday EP might be less like déjà vu. Morrison's old soul and musical-theater mojo suits him for classics like "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," "Let it Snow" and "Jingle Bell Rock," but I've heard more interesting versions by people in my mom's church congregation. A mashup of "I'll Be Home for Christmas" with "Mele Kalikimaka" is a gay ol' time, but otherwise, get in your sleigh and keep going. Nothing to see here.

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- Are **pregnant or planning to become pregnant.** It is not known if COMPLERA can harm your unborn child
- Are **breastfeeding: Women with HIV should not breastfeed** because they can pass HIV through their milk to the baby. Also, COMPLERA may pass through breast milk and could cause harm to the baby

COMPLERA can cause additional serious side effects:

- **New or worsening kidney problems, including kidney failure.** If you have had kidney problems, or take other medicines that may cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider may need to do regular blood tests.
- **Depression or mood changes.** Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms: feeling sad or hopeless, feeling anxious or restless, have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself.
- **Changes in liver enzymes:** People who have had hepatitis B or C, or who have had changes in their liver function tests in the past may have an increased risk for liver problems while taking COMPLERA. Some people without prior liver disease may also be at risk. Your healthcare provider may need to check your liver enzymes before and during treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do additional tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV medicine.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider if you start having new symptoms after starting COMPLERA.

The most common side effects reported with COMPLERA are trouble sleeping (insomnia), abnormal dreams, headache, dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, rash, tiredness, and depression. Some side effects also reported include vomiting, stomach pain or discomfort, skin discoloration (small spots or freckles) and pain.

This is not a complete list of side effects. Tell your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you notice any side effects while taking COMPLERA, and call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit http://www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Additional Information about taking COMPLERA:

- **Always take COMPLERA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it.**
- **Take COMPLERA with food.** Taking COMPLERA with food is important to help get the right amount of medicine in your body. (A protein drink does not replace food. If your healthcare provider stops COMPLERA, make certain you understand how to take your new medicine and whether you need to take your new medicine with a meal.)

Stay under the care of your healthcare provider during treatment with COMPLERA and see your healthcare provider regularly.

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information with **important warnings** on the following pages.

COMPLERA®
emtricitabine 200mg/rilpivirine 25mg/
tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300mg tablets

Learn more at www.**COMPLERA**.com

Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information

COMPLERA® (kom-PLEH-rah)
(emtricitabine, rilpivirine, tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) tablets

Brief summary of full Prescribing Information. For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information including Patient Information.

What is COMPLERA?

- **COMPLERA** is a prescription HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) medicine that is used to treat HIV-1 in adults
  - who have **never** taken HIV medicines before, **and**
  - who have an amount of HIV in their blood (this is called 'viral load') that is no more than 100,000 copies/mL. Your healthcare provider will measure your viral load.

(HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)).

- COMPLERA contains 3 medicines – rilpivirine, emtricitabine, tenofovir disoproxil fumarate – combined in one tablet. It is a complete regimen to treat HIV-1 infection and should not be used with other HIV medicines.
- It is not known if COMPLERA is safe and effective in children under the age of 18 years old.
- **COMPLERA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS.** You must stay on continuous therapy to control HIV infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.
- **Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about how to prevent passing HIV to other people.** Do not share or re-use needles or other injection equipment, and do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes and razor blades. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal fluids or blood.

What is the most important information I should know about COMPLERA?

COMPLERA can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take COMPLERA or similar (nucleoside analogs) medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**
  - feel very weak or tired
  - have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
  - have trouble breathing
  - have stomach pain with nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or vomiting
  - feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
  - feel dizzy or lightheaded
  - have a fast or irregular heartbeat
- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take COMPLERA. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**
  - your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
  - dark "tea-colored" urine
  - light-colored bowel movements (stools)
  - loss of appetite for several days or longer
  - nausea
  - stomach pain
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking COMPLERA for a long time.**
- **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** If you have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and take COMPLERA, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking COMPLERA. A "flare-up" is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before. COMPLERA is not approved for the treatment of HBV, so you must discuss your HBV with your healthcare provider.
  - Do not let your COMPLERA run out. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your COMPLERA is all gone.
  - Do not stop taking COMPLERA without first talking to your healthcare provider.
  - If you stop taking COMPLERA, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking COMPLERA.

Who should not take COMPLERA?

Do not take COMPLERA if:

- your HIV infection has been previously treated with HIV medicines.
- you are taking any of the following medicines:
  - **anti-seizure medicines:** carbamazepine (Carbatrol, Equetro, Tegretol, Tegretol-XR, Teril, Epitol); oxcarbazepine (Trileptal); phenobarbital (Luminal); phenytoin (Dilantin, Dilantin-125, Phenytek)
  - **anti-tuberculosis (anti-TB) medicines:** rifabutin (Mycobutin); rifampin (Rifater, Rifamate, Rimactane, Rifadin); rifapentine (Priftin)
  - **proton pump inhibitor (PPI)** medicine for certain stomach or intestinal problems: esomeprazole (Nexium, Vimovo); lansoprazole (Prevacid); dexlansoprazole (Dexilant); omeprazole (Prilosec, Zegerid); pantoprazole sodium (Protonix); rabeprazole (Aciphex)
  - more than 1 dose of the steroid medicine dexamethasone or dexamethasone sodium phosphate
  - St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
- **If you take COMPLERA, you should not take:**
  - Other medicines that contain tenofovir (Atripla, Stribild, Truvada, Viread)
  - Other medicines that contain emtricitabine or lamivudine (Combivir, Emtriva, Epivir or Epivir-HBV, Epzicom, Trizivir, Atripla, Truvada, Stribild)
  - rilpivirine (Edurant)
  - adefovir (Hepsera)

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking COMPLERA?

Before you take COMPLERA, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have or had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C virus infection, kidney problems, mental health problem or bone problems
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if COMPLERA can harm your unborn child.

  Pregnancy Registry. There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. **You should not breastfeed if you have HIV because of the risk of passing HIV to your baby.** Do not breastfeed if you are taking COMPLERA. At least two of the medicines contained in COMPLERA can be passed to your baby in your breast milk. We do not know whether this could harm your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

- **COMPLERA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how COMPLERA works, and may cause serious side effects.** If you take certain medicines with COMPLERA, the amount of COMPLERA in your body may be too low and it may not work to help control your HIV infection. The HIV virus in your body may become resistant to COMPLERA or other HIV medicines that are like it.

Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- an antacid medicine that contains aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. If you take an antacid during treatment with COMPLERA, take the antacid **at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after** you take COMPLERA.
- a medicine to block the acid in your stomach, including cimetidine (Tagamet), famotidine (Pepcid), nizatidine (Axid), or ranitidine hydrochloride (Zantac). If you take one of these medicines during treatment with COMPLERA, take the acid blocker **at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after** you take COMPLERA.
- any of these medicines (if taken by mouth or injection):
  - clarithromycin (Biaxin)
  - erythromycin (E-Mycin, Eryc, Ery-Tab, PCE, Pediazole, Ilosone)
  - fluconazole (Diflucan)
  - itraconazole (Sporanox)
  - ketoconazole (Nizoral)
  - methadone (Dolophine)
  - posaconazole (Noxafil)
  - telithromycin (Ketek)
  - voriconazole (Vfend)
- medicines that are eliminated by the kidney, including acyclovir (Zovirax), cidofovir (Vistide), ganciclovir (Cytovene IV, Vitrasert), valacyclovir (Valtrex), and valganciclovir (Valcyte)

What are the possible side effects of COMPLERA?

COMPLERA can cause serious side effects, including:

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about COMPLERA?"**
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure,** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. Your healthcare provider should do blood tests to check your kidneys before starting treatment with COMPLERA. If you have had kidney problems in the past or need to take another medicine that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider may need to do blood tests to check your kidneys during your treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Depression or mood changes. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:**
  - feeling sad or hopeless
  - feeling anxious or restless
  - have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself
- **Change in liver enzymes.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus infection or who have certain liver enzyme changes may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening liver problems during treatment with COMPLERA. Liver problems can also happen during treatment with COMPLERA in people without a history of liver disease. Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your liver enzymes before and during treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do additional tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the main part of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The cause and long term health effect of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV medicine.

The most common side effects of COMPLERA include:

- trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- abnormal dreams
- headache
- dizziness
- diarrhea
- nausea
- rash
- tiredness
- depression

Additional common side effects include:

- vomiting
- stomach pain or discomfort
- skin discoloration (small spots or freckles)
- pain

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of COMPLERA. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 (1-800-332-1088).

How should I take COMPLERA?

- **Stay under the care of your healthcare provider during treatment with COMPLERA.**
- **Take COMPLERA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it.**
- **Always take COMPLERA with food.** Taking COMPLERA with food is important to help get the right amount of medicine in your body. A protein drink is not a substitute for food. If your healthcare provider decides to stop COMPLERA and you are switched to new medicines to treat HIV that includes rilpivirine tablets, the rilpivirine tablets should be taken only with a meal.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking COMPLERA without first talking with your healthcare provider. See your healthcare provider regularly while taking COMPLERA.
- If you miss a dose of COMPLERA within 12 hours of the time you usually take it, take your dose of COMPLERA **with food** as soon as possible. Then, take your next dose of COMPLERA at the regularly scheduled time. If you miss a dose of COMPLERA by more than 12 hours of the time you usually take it, wait and then take the next dose of COMPLERA at the regularly scheduled time.
- Do not take more than your prescribed dose to make up for a missed dose.

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about COMPLERA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about COMPLERA that is written for health professionals, or call 1-800-445-3235 or go to www.COMPLERA.com

Issued: June 2013

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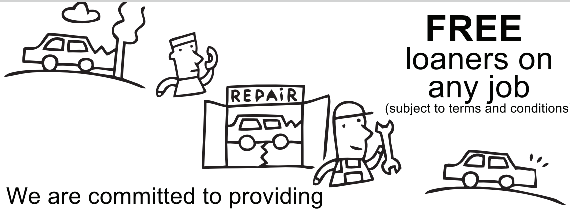

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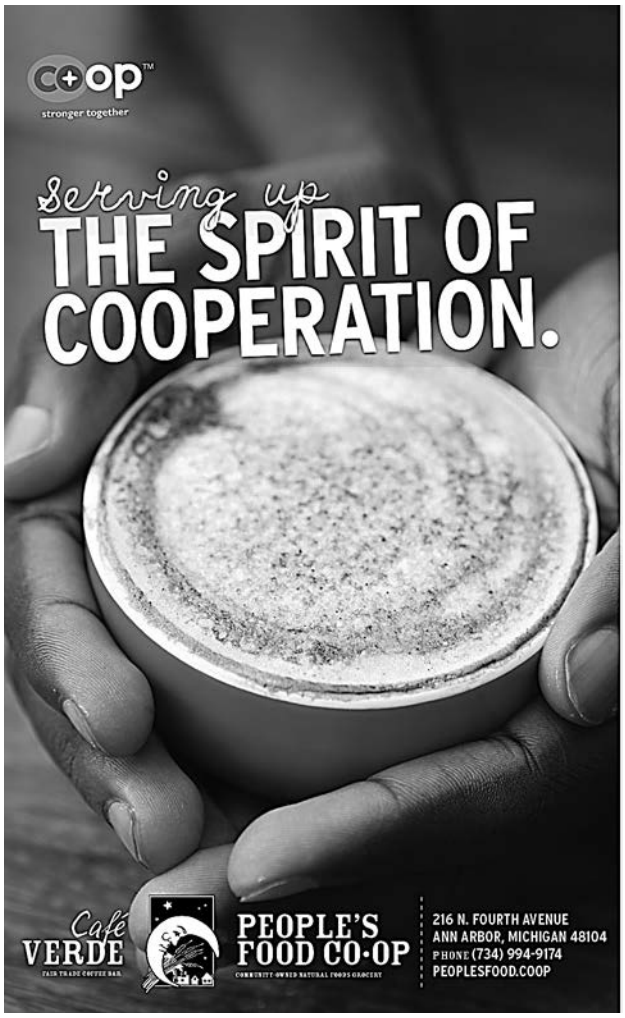

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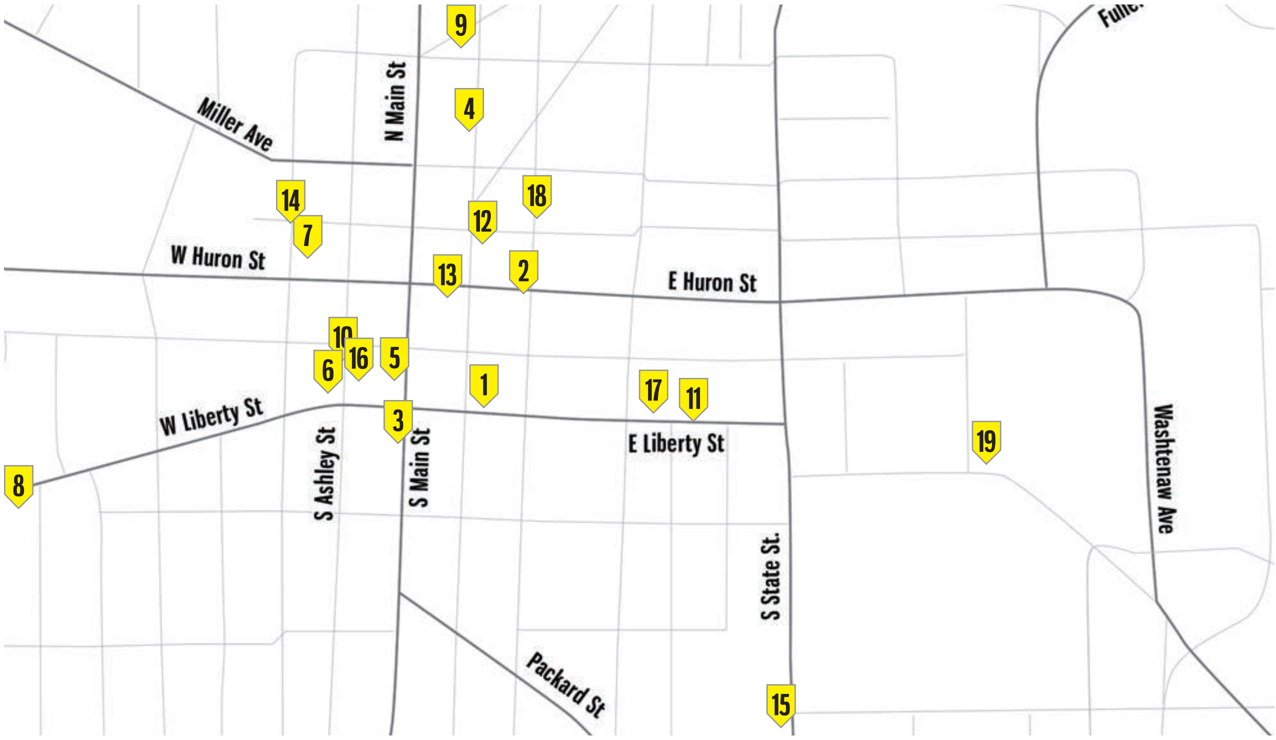

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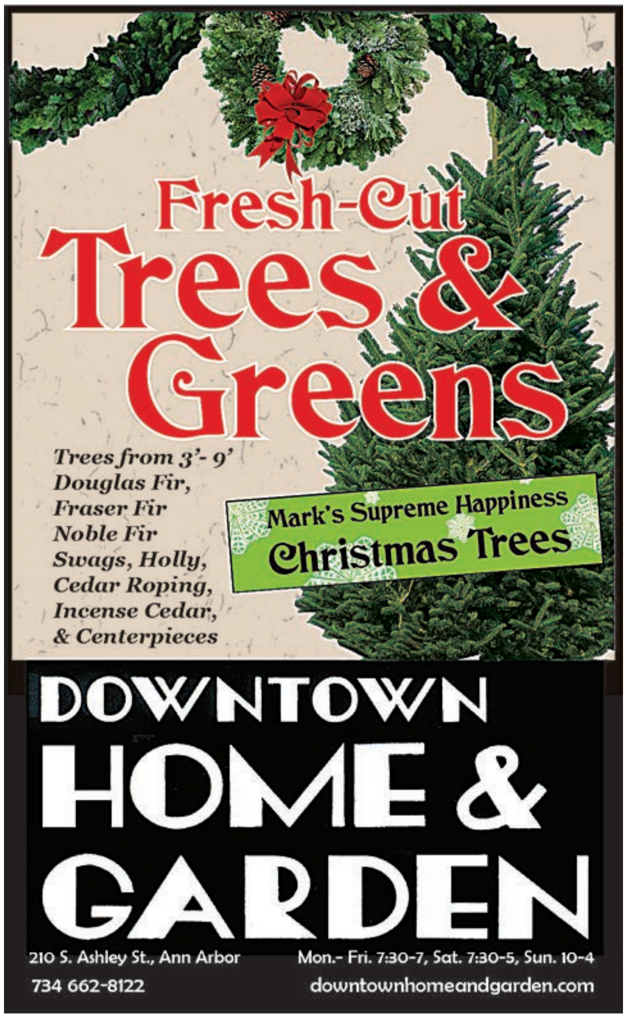
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The Royal Opera House's 'Nutcracker' Comes To Ann Arbor

Photos: Johan Persson

Escape to a magical and mysterious evening beginning at the very first notes of Tchaikovsky's overture to "The Nutcracker" at 7 p.m. Dec. 17 at Rave Cinemas Ann Arbor 20, 4100 Carpenter Road. Peter Wright's classic production, first seen at Covent Garden in 1984, is an essential part of Christmas for audiences of all ages.

Tickets are available now at participating theater box offices and online at www.fathomevents.com. For a complete list of theater locations and prices, visit the NCM Fathom Events website.

The Royal Opera House continues to lead the way in opera, ballet, music and dance in cinema both 2D and 3D and the many platforms available, including digital downloads, CD, DVD and Blu-ray, all distributed through Opus Arte and the new partnership with Digital Theatre, which allows ROH productions to be accessed on all of Digital Theatre's platforms including its apps for the iPhone, iPad and Samsung Smart TV as well as being available for streaming from the Internet.

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Lumiere: Pauline Scanlon, Éilís Kennedy. Photo: Vanessa Ellis

‘Irish Christmas in America’ At The Ark Dec. 16

Take a distinctively Irish journey into the season with the enchanting holiday show, “Irish Christmas in America.” The joyful performance highlights Irish holiday traditions through music, story, song and dance, with some of Ireland’s finest traditional musicians. Irish Music Magazine calls it “captivating”!

The show comes to The Ark in Ann Arbor at 8 p.m. Dec. 16.

Now in its ninth season, the 2013 tour brings back acclaimed vocal duo Lumiere, featuring the angelic voices of Pauline Scanlon and Éilís Kennedy, with renowned guitarist Donogh Hennessy (a founding member of Lunasa).

The astonishing young sean-nos dancer Brian Cunningham from Connemara dazzles with his athletic footwork. Séamus Begley, named Ireland’s 2013 Traditional Singer of the Year, joins in with his stunning vocal prowess and charming wit. The all-star band also includes Gráinne Hambly on harp, Sean Gavin on flute and uilleann pipes, and Oisin Mac Diarmada, the show’s producer and the brilliant young fiddler with the Irish group Téada.

Mac Diarmada created the show to bring some of Ireland’s lovely yet lesser-known holiday traditions to American audiences. Music, singing and dancing were intrinsic to the season in Ireland, and also for many Irish that found themselves in America.

“One of the most heartfelt themes of Irish Christmas is emigration,” says Mac Diarmada. “Music was a way that people stayed close to home.”

Since the first holiday tour in 2005, “Irish Christmas in America” has featured such stellar guest vocalists as Karan Casey (Solas), Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh (Danu), and Cathie Ryan (Cherish the Ladies). Performance appearances have included the National Geographic Society in Washington DC.

The new CD “An Irish Christmas Soundscape,” with Mac Diarmada, Begley, and other guests, is an accompaniment to the show, available to listen or purchase at irishchristmasinamerica.bandcamp.com

The Ark is located at 316 Main St, Ann Arbor. Tickets to the show are $20. For more information, visit theark.org and irishchristmasinamerica.com.

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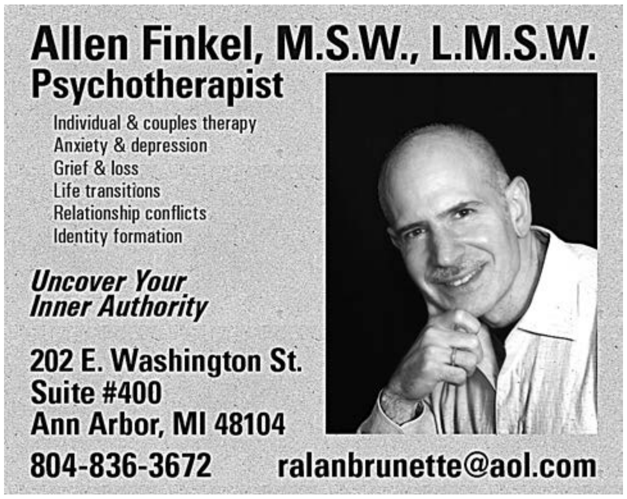

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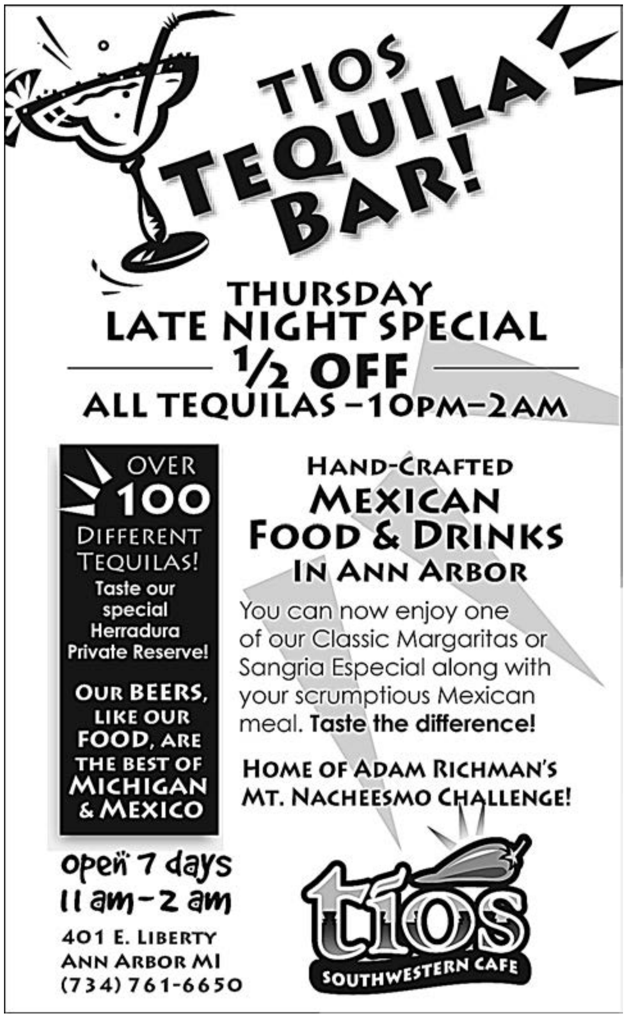

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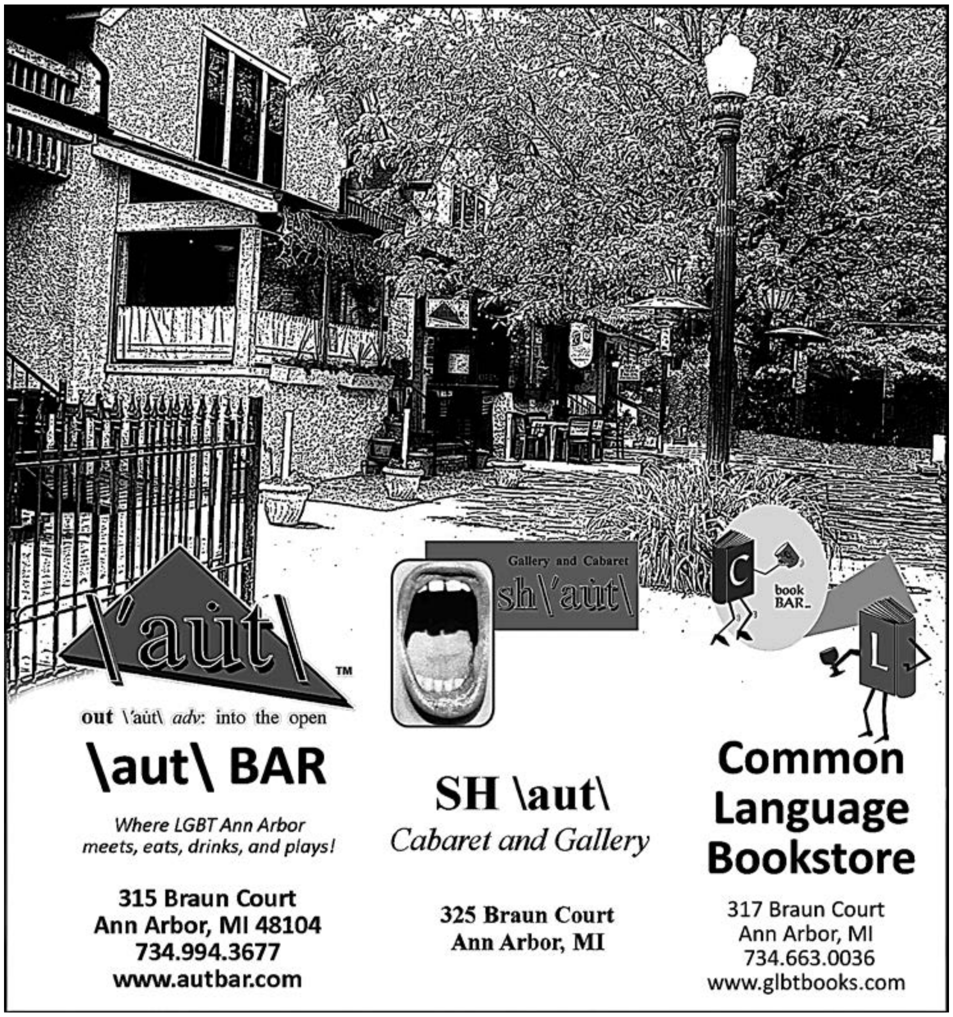

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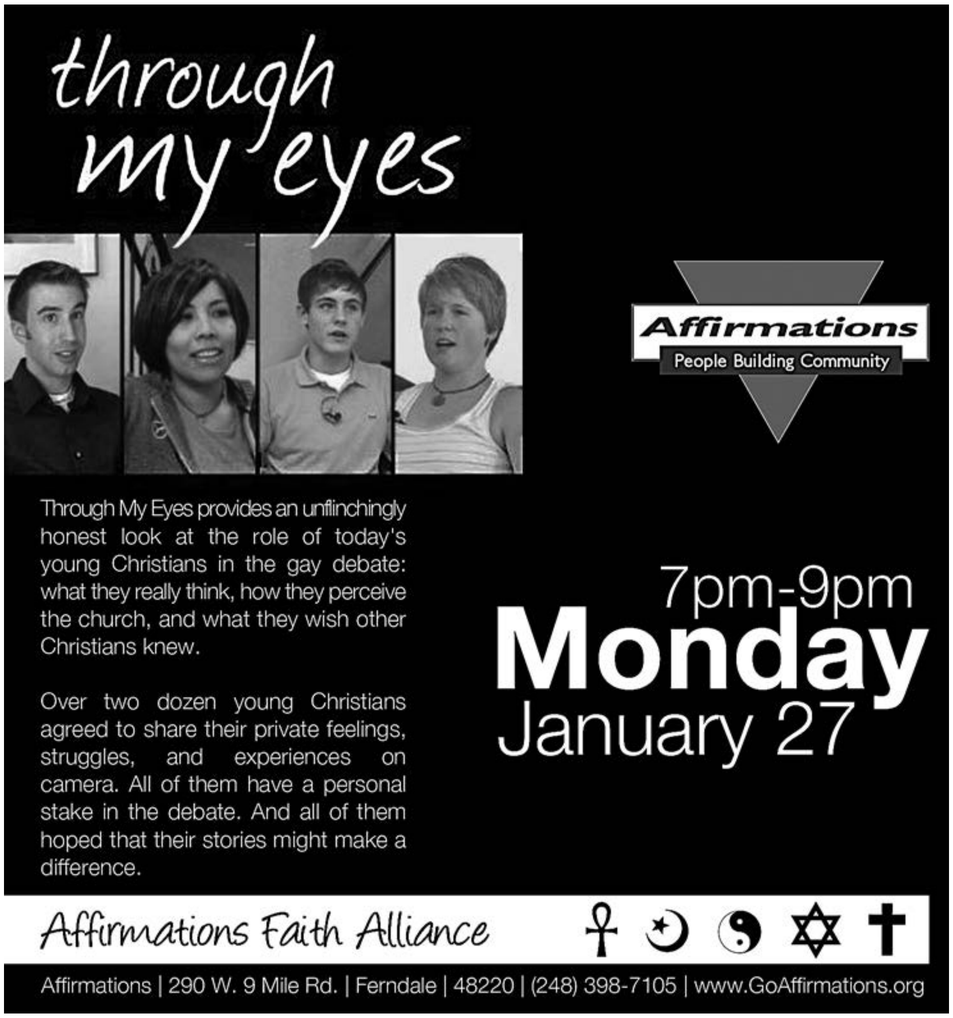
www.glbtbooks.com



through my eyes

Through My Eyes provides an unflinchingly honest look at the role of today's young Christians in the gay debate: what they really think, how they perceive the church, and what they wish other Christians knew.

Over two dozen young Christians agreed to share their private feelings, struggles, and experiences on camera. All of them have a personal stake in the debate. And all of them hoped that their stories might make a difference.

Affirmations
People Building Community

7pm-9pm
Monday
January 27

Affirmations Faith Alliance ☥ ☪ ☯ ✡ ✝

Affirmations | 290 W. 9 Mile Rd. | Ferndale | 48220 | (248) 398-7105 | www.GoAffirmations.org

Photo: Tony Lowe

Queens For Christmas

'12 Drags' Show Brings Holiday Cheer, Charity Funds

BY JEROME STUART NICHOLS

At its heart, Christmastime is all about giving, but usually, it's the high kicks, gifts and cookies that get the most attention. With the Vegas-style drag extravaganza "The 12 Drags of Christmas," all the razzle and dazzle is giving back to the community and helping to make a whole lot of children's holidays a lot warmer.

From the moment the lights go up at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 14, the upstairs at Fifth Avenue in Royal Oak will be a lot warmer too. Local and national legends of drag and female illusion will shimmer, sizzle and sashay across the stage to help raise money for Detroit-based non-profit Mittens for Detroit.

Midwesterners know the routine: starting in late August, people buy or pull out the old jackets and hats. By December we're wrapped in an entire bio dome of bubble goose down and various thermals with a white chocolate mocha. The whole process is something most people do without really thinking about it.

For many people, though, that simple routine is complicated by the fact they can't even afford things like food or housing. Mittens works to make sure people can stay warm through the frigid Michigan winter. Since 2010, Mittens has donated over 40,000 new pairs of gloves and mittens to children and adults in need.

Originated by "Detroit 1-8-7" star and Mittens founder Erin Cummings and Gary Baglio, owner of Five15 in Royal Oak, "The 12 Drags of Christmas" has raised over $35,000 for the cause. It's a job that all involved take seriously.

"There are so many children who don't have what they need," "12 Drags" emcee and local drag legend September Murphy said. "My first show I ever did 26 years ago was Toys for Tots. Children are very important. They are our future and I think we need to do what we can to help them."

In this case, "do what we can" means

INFO

The 12 Drags of Christmas

6 p.m. (doors), 7:30 p.m. (show) Dec. 14
Upstairs at 5th Avenue
215 West 5th Street, Royal Oak
Tickets available at www.12drags.com

See 12 Drags, page 45

2011 Wilde Award-nominated Mary Zentmyer returns to Detroit in "Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of Magi's Gold"at Detroit's City Theatre. Photo: File photo, courtesy of The Gem Theatre

Sister's Comedy Makes Up For Lackluster Mystery

BY DANA CASADEI

REVIEW

Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of Magi's Gold

City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Tuesday-Sunday through Dec. 8. 2 hours, 15 minutes. $38. 313-471-6611.

www.olympiaentertainment.com

Second grade was a rough year for me: bangs that were constantly in my eyes, a bright tie-dye vest that was worn as often as possible with my favorite plaid jumper. Great look, I know. My style choices weren't my only issues, though; I had one of the scariest teachers of my education that greeted me weekly at catechism, Sister Augusta. She was my only encounter with a nun, and let's just say she left her mark. So when I sat down at "Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of Magi's Gold" at the City Theatre, a flood of catechism flashbacks came rushing back. Thankfully this Sister (Mary Zentmyer) didn't leave me with any nun PTSD.

The show begins with some Christmas sing-a-longs, "Hark! The Herald Angel Sings" followed by "Jingle Bells" to get audiences in the holiday spirit. But before you can belt the rest of "Jingle Bells," Sister comes charging in, making countless remarks as she moves her way to the stage. Then the real fun begins.

While throwing out one-liners like "Leave room for The Holy Spirit" to a couple in the front, she begins to teach the class about the nativity. Side note: If you can't handle a little ribbing, don't sit anywhere near the front or volunteer to answer a question. Yes, there is Catholic trivia at this wonderfully interactive show, and Baby Jesus-themed prizes. But the show is so much more than just trying to win the prizes, with Sister commenting on everything from those who receive combination Christmas/birthday presents to her love for Animal Planet.

Zentmyer, who was nominated for a 2011 Wilde Award for her work in "Late Night Catechism 3: 'Til Death Do Us Part" at The Gem Theatre, is a charismatic hoot. When she's not busy guessing your confirmation name, she has an extremely warm smile and laugh, combined with amazing comedic timing. Her commentary is oftentimes as much fun as Maripat Donovan's script. Zentmyer does this fun, zany dance periodically and overly enjoys saying "Rafael," the name of an audience member. Let's be real, though: The audience loved every time he was called on stage to help her. God bless Rafael!

Donovan's script is full of zingers like "The Jewish people invented guilt, the Catholics perfected it" and Sister's refusal to call the three wise men wise. This leads to a brief speech about what the three wise women would have done differently, and it is fantastic. Even if you aren't a Catholic school or catechism survivor, the show will still leave you howling.

But there are some bumps along the way.

Sister's microphone had an echo the minute she started through the audience. This continued through Act I, along with a muffled sound that happened time and time again. Thankfully it was fixed for Act II, but Sister's microphone wasn't the only issue.

Much like a kid waiting for the school bell to ring, the second act will make you antsy. While most of the first act felt fresh and fun, the second drags quite a bit. Sister didn't begin to work on the "mystery" mentioned in the title until late in the show, by which point I was ready to leave. It doesn't help that the mystery seems to be the selling point in the press release. I would have been perfectly content if the second act had simply cast a live nativity set and finished Mary's story. There's no need to add "CSI" to one of the most vital Christmas stories ever. Baby Jesus would not be impressed.

Not all of Act II is rough, though. Watching her dress and pick volunteers for her live nativity scene is hilarious, combining everyday items ranging from a toilet seat cover to lampshades to complete them.

If you ever had a nun as Satan-like as my Sister Augusta, "Sister's Christmas Catechism" will leave you with memories of a nun that's hilarious and warm. No rulers were used as hitting devices in this production.

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Nine Lessons and Carols: December 21, 5:00 p.m.
with the Cathedral Choir

Christmas Eve, December 24:
Holy Eucharist, 5:00 p.m.
Festal Choral Eucharist, 10:30 p.m.

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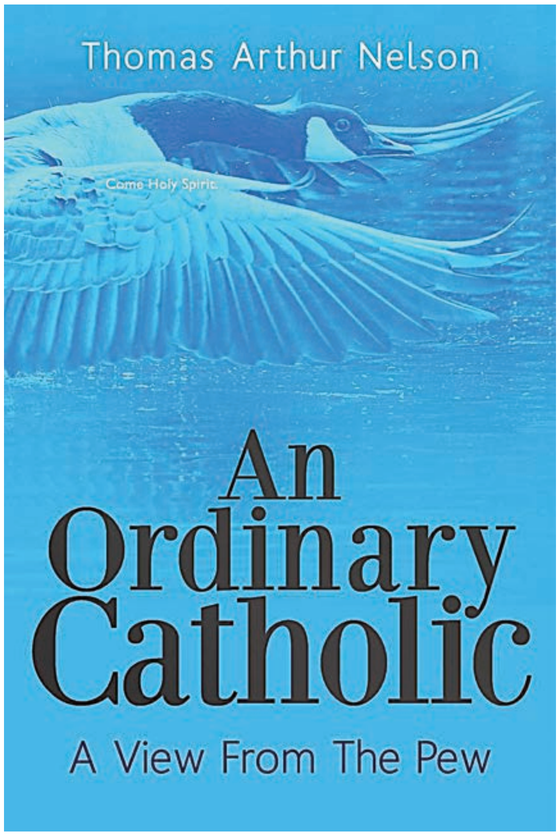
Ordinary Catholic: A View From The Pew



BY LARRY JAMISON

In the book "An Ordinary Catholic: A View From The Pew," one of the greatest gifts Thomas Arthur Nelson says he received is that of the birth of his gay son (when was the last time you heard that one?). The gifts Nelson gives us, in return, are his thoughts and experiences as a sobered (sometimes somber Catholic), and activist for the rights of LGBT people. Truth be told, none of us imagine having to fight for what is good and right in places that teach "Love others as you love yourself." Yet, for many of us, we all come to that point in our lives where the last straw is pulled out of our psyches. For Nelson, that last straw was pulled at his place of worship in a message that judged gay people with an unforgiving verdict of condemnation – all on the heels of the loss of his wife.

The following courageous actions by Nelson shock and hook the reader early on – he makes a very public stand in the defense of his gay son. We are then pulled away from this lightning bolt moment (perhaps too quickly) and are taken back in time for the backstory. Using text, pictures, journal entries and letters, we experience Nelson growing up in Michigan as a Catholic. We travel with him from the innocence of the '40s and '50s, and through the questionable, turbulent times like the '60s and '70s. There are heartwarming family stories, interesting supernatural experiences and iconic settings like a terrific tale about riding out a storm on one of the Great Lakes. We soon witness a man who once considered himself a "roaming" Catholic, as he puts it, compelled to dig into his faith. His spiritual experiences are incredibly touching as he finds rich rewards, but also foreboding red flags signifying dangers to come. See, there are few things organized religion hates worse then someone who questions or challenges the status quo. Nelson has clearly set sail on a challenging course. Regardless, you can feel Nelson's charm, passion and love which leap off the pages and gently embraces you. It is no surprise, then, that one of the most stalwart of Cardinals is forced to acknowledge Nelson's questioning heart as life's trauma's has its way with this faithful Catholic.

Though Nelson himself would hardly admit it, he comes with the credentials of a graduate from Notre Dame, a veteran of the navy, and a past president of PFLAG for many years. Additionally, he makes a passionate case as an experienced father, for why his gay son was the biggest turning point in his life. Both whom, with a pension toward suicidal leanings, take turns saving each other.

The harsh treatment of homosexuals within biblical inspired organizations is a running theme woven throughout the book that sends Nelson's family in varying directions in their faith choices. Tough as they are, the wounds are as apparent as much as their persistence to get the answers they demand.

We get quite a history on Nelson that comes across like a virtual kaleidoscope of stories and reflections. These stories will no doubt touch different people for different reasons. However, readers will find large portions of exhaustive detail and descriptions of events that really don't add to the story. One example would be the actual birth process for all of his children whom we hear little of afterward. It clearly proves the point that even Nelson himself admits to: this book is part memoir for his family. Make no mistake about it, though, this book has supportive LGBT themes woven throughout. His gay son is not the focus of the book but rather a turning point in his life. It is a love letter to future generations, so who can fault him for that? For those with a spiritual leaning and LGBT loved ones, this book is well worth reading. If you are a Catholic, then it truly is a must-read.

Larry Jamison is a retired teachers aide in special education and freelance writer living in southeast Michigan.

Inclusive Holiday Services

COMPILED BY SHELBY CLARK

ANGLICAN/EPISCOPAL

The Cathedral Church of St. Paul
4800 Woodward Ave., Detroit
313-831-5000
www.detroitcathedral.org
Nine Lessons and Carols Mass: Dec. 21, 5:00 p.m.
Christmas Eve Masses, Dec. 24: 5:00 p.m., 10:30 p.m.

CATHOLIC

Dignity Detroit
Sacred Heart Chapel, Marygrove College, 8425 W. McNichols Road, Detroit
313-278-4786
www.dignitydetroit.org
Sunday, Dec. 29, 6 p.m.

Ecumenical Catholic Church of Christ
5247 Sheridan St., Detroit
www.cathedralofstanthonydetroit.org/
Christmas Eve Candelight Service, Dec. 24, 5 p.m.
Christmas Day Celebration, Dec. 25, 11 a.m.

JEWISH

Congregation Shir Tikvah
3900 Northfield Pkwy., Troy
248-649-4418, ext. 55
www.shirtikvah.org/
Post-Chanukah Service and Music Shabbat Service, Dec.6: 7:15 p.m.

LUTHERAN (ELCA)

Zion Lutheran Church (ELCA)
143 Albany at Woodward, Ferndale
248-398-5510
www.fernzion.org
Christmas Eve Worship, Dec. 24, 7 p.m. and 11 p.m.

METHODIST

First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor
Downtown:
120 S. State St.,
Ann Arbor
Green Wood: 1001 Green Road,
Ann Arbor
734-662-4536
www.fumc-a2.org
Downtown Christmas Eve Services, Dec. 24, 5 p.m., 7 p.m., 9 p.m., and 11:00 p.m.
Green Wood Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24, 5 p.m.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

Metropolitan Community Church of Detroit
2441 Pinecrest Lane, Ferndale
248-399-7741
www.mccdetroit.org

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24, 10:00 p.m.
Divine Peace Metropolitan Community Church
1400 Scott Lake Road, Suite H,

See Holiday Calendar, page 38

First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor
www.fumc-a2.org
734-662-4536
Downtown: 120 S. State St.
Regular Sunday worship at 9:30 & 11:15 am
Green Wood: 1001 Green Rd.
Regular Saturday worship at 5 pm

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 Downtown, 7:30 pm
An Organist's Christmas Concert
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 Downtown, 9:00 am
Cookie Walk to benefit missions
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15 Downtown, 9:30&11:15 am
Vivaldi: Magnificat in G Minor, RV 610
Join us in our morning worship as we present the Canticle of the Virgin Mary found in the Gospel of Luke.
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24
Downtown Christmas Eve Services
5:00 pm Service for young children and their families
7:00 pm Family service featuring children & adult ensembles
9:00 pm Communion service with music by vocal soloists
11:00 pm Candlelight service with music provided by the Chancel Choir & Instrumental ensemble
Parking available for a fee at Liberty Square Garage
Green Wood Christmas Eve Service
5:00 pm Candlelight Family Service

DIGNITY DETROIT
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Solstice Service December 20 7 PM
Christmas Eve Service December 24 5:30 PM
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Most Sundays at 8:30 and 11:00
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Divine Peace
Metropolitan Community Church

Dec. 8 10 A.M.
Second Sunday of Advent: Sacred People
Dec. 15 10 A.M.
Third Sunday of Advent: Sacred Space
Dec. 22 10 A.M.
Fourth Sunday of Advent: Sacred Knowing
Dec. 24 11 P.M.
Christmas Eve: Sacred Being
Dec. 29 10 A.M.
Christmastide Sunday: Sacred Doing

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Happenings

OUTINGS

Thursday, Dec. 5

Free HIV Testing 2 p.m. Free, anonymous HIV testing is available at S3 Safe Sex Store every Thursday until 9 p.m. Testing is performed by HARC staff. Call to schedule an appointment, but walk-ins are more than welcome. S3 Safe Sex Store and HIVAIDS Resource Center, 1209 S. University, **Ann Arbor.** 734-741-1434. Info@bak-inc.com S3safesexstore.com

Celebrating World AIDS Day 2013 6 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres, refreshments, entertainment and a brief presentation. Honorary chairs include David Coulter, Mayor of Ferndale and Mary Liz Curtin of Leon & Lulu. Michigan AIDS Coalition, 503 E. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-5130. ssivanandham@michiganaidscoalition.org

KGLRC Fundraiser: Paint By Number (Of Glasses) 6:30 p.m. Includes wine, snacks and your own painting of the masterpiece above. Tickets: $50. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 1924 Whites Road, **Kalamazoo.** Kglrc.org

Transgender Helpline 6:30 p.m. A representative from Transgender Michigan is available to answer questions on helpline. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

20 Somethings 7 p.m. Social group for young adults. Followed by an evening out. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Great Female Artists of Detroit 7 p.m. The rich history of Detroit shown through portraits, still life, city-scapes and more, all created by local artists with international careers!Presented by Native Detroiter Suzanne Bilek. She is an author and speaker who specializes in the topic of local art history. Ferndale Public Library, 222 E. Nine Mile Roadd, **Ferndale.** 248-546-2504. fplarts@ferndalepubliclibrary.org Facebook.com/events/765983216760933/

JGN Family & Friends 7 p.m. Topics vary from month to month. This is a gathering of people who have family or friends who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. Join us as we offer support, share our experiences, and learn about the issues impacting the LGBTQ and allied community. The Jewish Gay Network of Michigan, 6600 W. Maple Road, **West Bloomfield.** 248-432-5661. jgnmi.org

Real to Reel: I Am Divine 7 p.m. A definitive biographical portrait of Harris Glenn Milstead, a. k. a. Divine, and honors him in just the way he always craved-as a serious artist and immortal star. Tickets: $5-7. Saugatuck Center for the Arts, 400 Culver St., **Saugatuck.** 269-857-2399. Sc4a.org

Friday, Dec. 6

Free STI & Rapid HIV Testing 5 p.m. Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, Trichomoniasis, Syphilis. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Detroit Michfest Holiday Potluck 6 p.m. Bring a dish to share. Baked goods and non-alcoholic beverages available for purchase. This is a kid-friendly event. Boys under four and girls of all ages are welcome. Always Brewing Detroit, 19180 Grand River Ave., **Detroit.** 313-282-5396. ddanger42@yahoo.com Facebook.com/groups/337687056289157

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Coming Out Party = Join seven gay and lesbian comedians and storytellers as they recount the ups and downs of coming out to their family, friends and co-workers in this funny and inspirational series of monologues. Sharing their personal experiences of love, laughter, heartache and joy, speakers included on the bill are Terry Sweeney, Dan Renzi, Rene Hicks, Jackie Beat, Sabrina Matthews, Bob Smith and John Riggi. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Rent Movie Night & Sing-Along 8 p.m. Free HIV testing will be provided. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Bear Trap 9 p.m. All new weekly party for bears, cubs and their admirers. Hayloft Saloon, 8070 Greenfield Road, **Detroit.** 313-581-8913. Hayloftsaloon.com

Pride Friday 9 p.m. The one and only gay night. 18+. Guys with college ID get in free before 11 p.m. Cover: $5+. Necto, 516 E. Liberty St., **Ann Arbor.** 734-994-5835. Thenecto.com

Saturday, Dec. 7

Flu Clinic Flu shots. Insurances accepted. $15 if out of pocket. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Noel Night 5 p.m. This fun-filled night features shopping, horse-drawn carriage rides, carolers, music, dance, children's activities and enough surprises to satisfy the biggest Scrooge in the crowd. Free. MOCAD, 4454 Woodward Ave., **Detroit.** 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

Men's Discussion Group 6 p.m. Lighthearted or in-depth discussion on a variety of topics. For gay, bi-affectional, and transgender men 18 and up. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Seventeenth Annual Evening of Sacred Song 7 p.m. All proceeds after expenses go to JTCC. Tickets: $15-20. Jim Toy Community Center, 2275 Platt Road, **Ann Arbor.** 734-761-7962. machida@comcast.net Jimtoycenter.com

Open Meditation Saturdays 9 p.m. A communal, non-hierarchical meditation space open to all. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Drag Queen Bingo 10 p.m. A fun alternative to your usual weekend hot spots. Shows get out just early enough for you to hit the local clubs or bars! Refreshments from our full coffee bar (coffees, teas, smoothies), sodas, water, and more. Tickets: $20. 18+. Club Five15, 515 S. Washington Ave., **Royal Oak.** 248-515-2551. five15. net

Sunday, Dec. 8

Tashmoo Biergarten 12 p.m. Pop-up European style beer garden with Detroit sensibility. Food, beer, games, and more. Location often varies. Tashmoo Biergarten, 1420 Van Dyke, **Detroit.** guten-tag@tashmoodetroit.com Tashmoodetroit.com

Reception to Benefit April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse v. Richard Snyder, et al. 3 p.m. Tickets: $100-1000. Michigan Marriage Challenge, 50 Ridge Road, **Pleasant Ridge.** 248-267-3309. Michiganmarriagechallenge.com

Born of Gods Pure Love: A Candlelight Service of Scripture and Song 4 p.m. St. James Choir and soloists, with harp, flute, and oboe accompaniment. Featuring Kirke Mechems Seven Joys of Christmas and other carols and choral works for Advent and Christmas. Freewill offering. St. James Episcopal Church, 355 W. Maple, **Birmingham.** 248-644-0820. music@stjamesbirmingham.org Stjamesbirmingham.org

Singles Sunday 4 p.m. Lesbian event. GOAL, 200 N. Main St., **Royal Oak.** 248-943-2411. Meetup.com/GOAL-Get-Out-And-Live-LGBT

Conversation Station 5 p.m. A new topic is discussed each week. As always, If anyone has something they want to talk about, feel free to start a discussion. We are not limited to the chosen topic. We are a group of friends who enjoy each others company and support each other in any way we can. GOAL, 714 S. Washington, **Royal Oak.** 248-981-4227. MarciLWilliams@yahoo.com GetOutAndLive. me

Monthly Meeting 5 p.m. Black and White Men Together-Detroit, 714 S. Washington, **Royal Oak.** 248-219-0772. bwmtdetroit@sbcglobal. net

The Reel Thing-Lesbian Movies at the Emagine 7 p.m. Every second Sunday, a LGBT-themed movie will be played. Title not to be revealed until night of each showing! GOAL, 200 N. Main St., **Royal Oak.** Meetup.com/GOAL-Get-Out-And-Live-LGBT

Monday, Dec. 9

Fun Run & Walk Program 6:30 p.m. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, **Kalamazoo.** 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

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► Holiday Calendar

Continued from p. 37

Waterford
248-332-1186
www.dpmcc.net

Advent Masses, Dec. 8, 15, and 22: 10 a.m.
Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 11 p.m.
Christmastide Sunday, Dec. 29, 10 a.m.

PRESBYTERIAN

First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham
1669 W. Maple Road, Birmingham
248-644-2040
www.fpcbirmingham.org
Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24, 2 p.m., 5 p.m., 8 p.m., and 11 p.m.

Westminster Church of Detroit
17567 Hubbell, Detroit
313-341-2697 ext. 200
www.wcodetroit.org
Christmas Eve Carols: 7:30 p.m.
Special Sunday Services, Dec. 8, 29 and Jan 5, 10 a.m.

UNITARIAN

First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor
4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, Ann Arbor
734-665-6158
www.uuaa.org
Christmas Eve Services, Dec. 24, 4:30 p.m., 7 p.m., and 9 p.m.

First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit
4605 Cass Ave., Detroit
313-833-9107
www.1stuu.org
The Solar Wheel, Dec. 22, 11 a.m.
Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24: 7 p.m.

Grosse Pointe Unitarian Church
17150 Maumee, Grosse Pointe
www.gpuc.us
Solstice Service, Dec. 20, 7 p.m.
Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m.

Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington
25301 Halsted Road, Farmington Hills
248-478-7272
www.uufarmington.org
Christmas Eve Service, Dec. 24, 7 p.m.

United Church of Christ
FPO-Edgewood United Chuch
2930 Woodward Ave., Detroit
313-259-0000
Sundays: 11 a.m.

For more information on services, visit the BTL calendar at www.pridesource.com/calendar or check out other inclusive organizations in the BTL Yellow Pages at www.pridesource.com/directory.

Editor's Pick

Jennifer and Kathleen LaTosch and Carol F. Breitmeyer and Don Joneswill be working to support the Michigan Marriage Challenge. The challenge currently surrounds the April DeBoer and Jayne Rowse vs. Richard Snyder, et al. case, which needs funding for the crucial litigation.

DeBoer and Rowse are the lesbian couple who made national headlines by seeking to marry and jointly adopt each other's children. Michigan, which is one of 35 states banning same-sex marriage, could potentially have its current ruling overturned if the couple's lawsuit finds success. The same-sex marriage case was delayed in October.

The event for the DeBoer/Rowse Fund will be hosted from 3 to 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 8 at the home of Carol Breitmeye and Don Jones at 50 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge. The levels of sponsorship range from $100 to $1,000. For more information, call Jennifer LaTosch at 248-267-3309 or visit www.michiganmarriagechallenge.com.

Movement with Kristi Faulkner Dance 7 p.m. A different genre of movement each week, including modern dance, ballet, jazz, hip hop/breaking, soft shoe tap dance, and stretch and strengthening. Workshops are designed for beginning/intermediate movers ages 16-55. Tickets: $5. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Tuesday, Dec. 10

Christmas at Edsel and Eleanor Ford House 7:30 a.m. This historic home is decorated to keep Eleanor's holiday traditions that started in the 1930s, which includes a 15-foot Christmas tree in the grand Gallery space. Each room is decorated for the season and tells a story of how the Ford Family shared holiday traditions. We have pick up destinations in Madison Heights, Novi and Wixom. Tickets: $70. Step On Bus Tours, 215 W. Troy, Suite 2046, **Ferndale.** 248-619-6692. steponbustours@gmail.com Steponbustours.com

Older Adult and Senior Helpline 4 p.m. Provides peer counseling, empathy and community resources for LGBT adults. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 1-800-398-4297. goaffirmations.org

Trans/Genderqueer Peer Group 4 p.m. EMU LGBTRC, **Ypsilanti.** 734-487-4149. Emich.edu/lgbtrc

Board of Directors Meeting 6 p.m. Fair Food Matters, 323 North Burdick St., **Kalamazoo.** Fairfoodmatters.org

Talk Tuesdays 6 p.m. Free. KICK, 41 Burroughs St. 109, **Detroit.** 313-285-9733. e-kick.org

Euchre at Esquire Club 6:30 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 1250 Turner St., **Lansing.** 517-487-5338. lahronline.org

Life's a Stitch 6:30 p.m. Open to those who Crochet, Knit, Quilt, Needlepoint, Macrame and Jewelry. Free. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Greater Lansing Gay Men's Chorus Rehearsal 6:45 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 510 W. Ottawa St., **Lansing.** info@glgmc.org

Coming Out Over Coffee 7 p.m. Casual discussion group about "coming out. " Welcomes anyone at any point in their journey. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Amy Jill Levine Discussion on misconceptions between Jews and Christians 7:30 p.m. Amy-Jill Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies and Professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and College of Arts and Science. A dessert reception, book sale and signing will follow the program. Tickets: $10-12. The Berman Center for the Performing Arts, 6600 W. Maple Road, **West Bloomfield.** 248-661-1900. info@theberman.org Theberman.org

Tea & Talk 8 p.m. Open discussion with free tea and treats. Triple Goddess New Age Bookstore, 1824 E. Michigan Ave., **Lansing.** 517-347-2112. triplegoddessbookstore. net

Wednesday, Dec. 11

TransCend TransCend provides support and resources to the Southwest Michigan transgender community, their significant others, family, friends, and allies. Meetings occur twice per month on the 2nd Wednesday and 4th Sunday. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo.** 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

COBO Support Group 5 p.m. Coming out, being out. EMU LGBTRC, **Ypsilanti.** 734-487-4149. Emich.edu/lgbtrc

Newly Single Support Group 7 p.m. Group for all dealing with the end of a relationship and want to talk-or listen-to others who share similar experiences. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Open Arms Support Group 7 p.m. Southeast Michigan's lonest running peer-run HIV/AIDS support group for those infected or affected by HIV or AIDS. Michigan Aids Coalition, 429 Livernois, **Ferndale.** 248-545-1435. openarms@michiganaidscoalition.org Michiganaidscoalition.org

Significant Other Support 7 p.m. Discussion and support group for friends and loved ones of LGBT. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Sistrum Weekly Rehearsal 7 p.m. Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus, 215 N. Capital Ave., **Lansing.** Sistrum.org

Young@Heart 7 p.m. Socializing and conversation for those 45 and older. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, **Ferndale.** 248-398-7105. goaffirmations.org

Whiskey Wednesday 8 p.m. Country line dancing. Free juke box. MaleBox Michigan, 23365 Hoover Road, **Warren.** 586-806-2390. Facebook.com/Male

Karaoke Night 9 p.m. Lansing Association for Human Rights, 1250 Turner St., **Lansing.** 517-487-5338. lahronline.org

Thursday, Dec. 12

Connections 6 p.m. Open to all LGBTQ and Ally youth from 13-18. Join us to meet other LGBTQ and Ally teens and socialize in a safe space. Kalamazoo Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, 629 Pioneer St., **Kalamazoo.** 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

MUSIC & MORE

CLASSICAL

Fort Street Chorale "Fort Street Chorale and Chamber Orchestra Presents Handel's Messiah" The annual performances of Handel's Christmas oratorio in the magnificent sanctuary decorated in holiday splendor signal the beginning of the holiday season for many. Tickets: $15-20. Fort Street Presbyterian Church, 631 W. Fort St., Detroit. 3 p.m. Dec. 8. 313-961-4533. Fortstreet.org

Lansing Symphony Orchestra "Boisterous Brass!" J. S. BACH-My Spirit Be Joyful J. S. BACH-Contrapunctus II. EDWARD GREGSON-Equale Dances. ROBERT ELKJER-Entangoed. MORLEY CALVERT-Suite from the Monteregian Hills Selection of Holiday Carols. Molly Grove Chapel, First Presbyterian Church, Lansing. 3 p.m. Dec. 8. Lansingsymphony.org

Macomb Center for the Performing Arts "Holiday Brass" Join the DCWS, along with The Fraser Singers from Fraser High School, directed by Pasquale Pascaretti, to celebrate the splendor of the season. Tickets: $15-25. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 7:30 p.m. Dec. 10. 586-286-2222. Macombcenter.com

University Musical Society and Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra "Handel's Messiah" Tickets: $10. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor. Dec. 7-Dec. 8. 734-764-2538. Ums.org

COMEDY

Live Nation "Trailer Park Boys" The Dear Santa Claus Tour. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 10. 734-668-8397. Michtheater.org

The Magic Bag "Gilbert Gottfried" Tickets: $25. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Dec. 6-Dec. 6. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

CONCERTS

Bach Festival Society of Kalamazoo "BachFest Christmas!" Tickets: $5-16. Stetson Chapel, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo. 4 p.m. Dec. 8. 269-337-7407. Kalamazoobachfestival.org

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Patti's Swinging Christmas: A Tribute to Ella and Duke." Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 4 p.m. Dec. 8. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Royal Oak Music Theatre "Halestorm with special guest Redlight King & Stars in Stereo" All ages. Tickets: $19. 99-25. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. Fourth St., Royal Oak. 6:30 p.m. Dec. 5. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Acorn Theater "Howard Levy In Trio Globo" Tickets: $30. The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks. 8 p.m. Dec. 6. 269-756-3879. Acorntheater.com

The Acorn Theater "Christmas Treasures: A Best of Open Mic Christmas Program" Tickets: $5. The Acorn Theater, 107 Generations Dr., Three Oaks. 6:30 p.m. Dec. 10. 269-756-3879. Acorntheater.com

The Ark "Joe Henry" Tickets: $20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 5. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Ark "Black Jake & The Carnies" With special guest Crane Wives. Tickets: $15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. Dec. 6. 734-761-1800. Theark.org

The Magic Bag "The English Beat" Featuring Dave Wakeling. Tickets: $22+. The Magic Bag, 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. 7 p.m. Dec. 5. 248-544-3030. Themagicbag.com

The Majestic "Protest the Hero with Architects, Affiance & The Kindred" All ages. Tickets: $16-18. The Magic Stick, 4120 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6 p.m. Dec. 8. 313-833-9700. Majesticdetroit.com

THEATER

CIVIC/COMMUNITY THEATER

A Wonderful Worldful of Christmas $10. Spotlight on Youth at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Road, Canton. Dec. 12 - 15. 734-394-5300. Canton-mi.org/villagetheater

Annie $16-18. Farmington Players, 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. Dec. 13 - 29. 248-473-1856. Farmingtonplayers.org

Christmasville $10-12. Emergent Arts at The Mix Studio Theatre, 8 N. Washington St., Ypsilanti. Dec. 12 - 22. 734-985-0875. emergentarts.com

Peter Pan $7-24. Kalamazoo Civic Theatre at Civic Auditorium, 329 S. Park St., Kalamazoo. Through Dec. 15. 269-343-1313. kazoocivic.com

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever $7-15. The Twin City Players, 600 W. Glenlord Road, St. Joseph. Dec. 6 - 22. 269-429-0400. twincityplayers.org

The Fantasticks $18. Stagecrafters, Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. Dec. 6 - 22. 248-541-6430. Stagecrafters.org

The FlutterBy Hour $15. Barefoot Productions, 240 N. Main St., Plymouth. 8 p.m. Dec. 7. 734-560-1493. justgobarefoot.com

White Christmas The Musical $12-20. Riverwalk Theatre, 228 Museum Dr., Lansing. Dec. 4 - 15. 517-482-5700. riverwalkthreatre.com

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEATER

'Twas the Night Before Christmas $10-20. Bonstelle Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through Dec. 8. 313-577-2960. bonstelle.coom

Late Night Broadway $5-20. The University Theatre at Williams Theatre on the campus of Western Michigan University, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. Dec. 5 - 7. 269-387-6222. Wmich.edu/theatre

PROFESSIONAL

'Twas the Night Before Christmas $10-25. Two Muses Theatre at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 6800 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield. Dec. 7 - 22. 248-850-9919. twomusestheatre.org

A Christmas Carol $18-41. Meadow Brook Theatre, 2200 N. Squirrel Road, Rochester. Through Dec. 22. 248-377-3300. mbtheatre.com

A Facility for Living $17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through Dec. 29. 313-868-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

See Happenings, page 40

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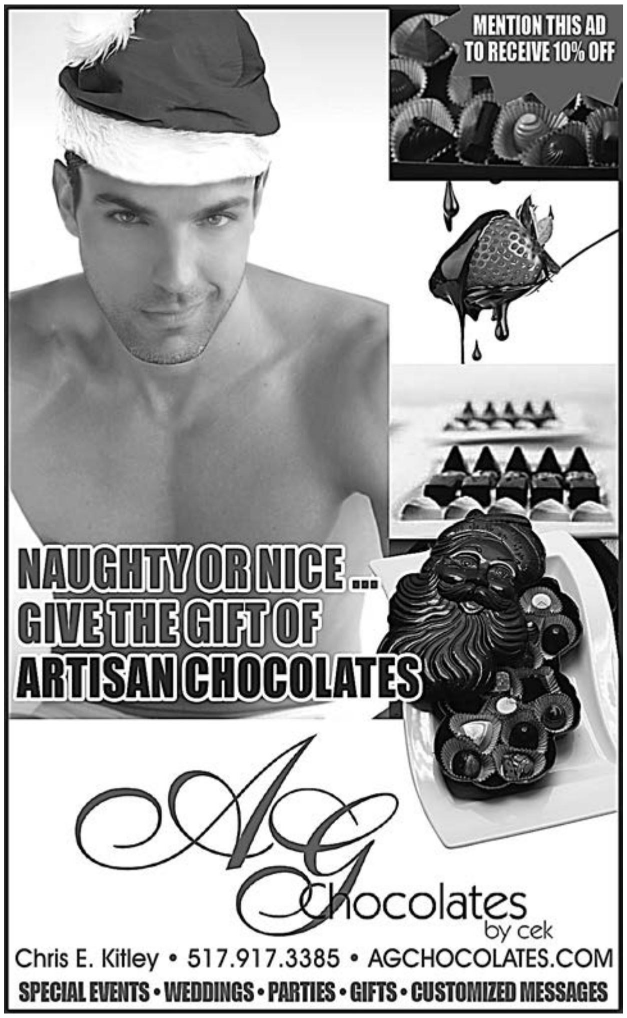

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► Happenings

Continued from p. 39

Big Love $12-30. Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through Dec. 7. 313-577-2972. Hilberry.com

Christmas Belles $15-18. Broadway Onstage Live Theatre, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Dec. 6 - 21. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

Cirque Dreams Holidaze $19-69. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 3 - 7. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

ComedySportz Michigan Actors Studio, 648 E. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 877-636-3320. comedysportzdetroit.com

Ebenezer $29-32. Tipping Point Theatre, 361 E. Cady St., Northville. Through Dec. 31. 248-347-0003. tippingpointtheatre.com

Elf The Musical $24-72. Broadway in Detroit, Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St., Detroit. Dec. 3 - 15. 313-237-SING. broadwayindetroit.com

Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some!) $10-25. Two Muses Theatre at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 6800 Orchard Lake ROad, West Bloomfield. Dec. 6 - 22. 248-850-9919. twomusestheatre.org

Fast Times at Nazareth High $20. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Through Dec. 14. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Great American Christmas $48-53. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. 3 p.m. Dec. 8. 586-286-2222. macombcenter.com

Helm $5-10. PuppetART at Detroit Puppet Theater, 25 E. Grand River Ave., Detroit. Dec. 1 - 8. 313-961-7777. puppetart.org

Home for the Holidays $32-39; includes dinner, non-alcoholic beverage, dessert & show. The Dio - Dining and Entertainment, 135 E. Main St., Pinckney. Through Dec. 23. 517-672-6009. diotheatre.com

I Love A Piano $33-35. Farmers Alley Theatre, 221 Farmers Alley, Kalamazoo. Dec. 6 - 29. 269-343-2727. farmersalleytheatre.com

Irving Berlin's White Christmas $15-28. The Encore Musical Theatre, 3126 Broad St., Dexter. Through Dec. 22. 734-268-6200. theencoretheatre.org

Late Night Saturdays $10. Planet Ant Theatre, 2357 Caniff, Hamtramck. Through Dec. 14. 313-365-4948. planetant.com

Mamma Mia! $35-63. Miller Auditorium, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo. Dec. 10 - 11. 269-387-2300. millerauditorium.com

My Way: A Musical Tribute to Frank Sinatra $22-25. The Box Theater, 90 Macomb Place, Mount Clemens. Through Dec. 14. 596-954-2677. theboxtheater.com

Mythbusters: Behind the Myths Tour $35-150. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6 p.m. Dec. 8. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Orphan Train $20. What A Do Theatre, 4071 W. Dickman Road, Springfield. Through Dec. 14. 269-282-1953. whatado.org

Over the River and Through the Woods $15-25. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam St., Williamston. Through Dec. 29. 517-655-SHOW. williamstontheatre.org

Rumplestiltskin $7. Tibbits Opera House, 14 S. Hanchett St., Coldwater. 2 p.m. Dec. 8. 517-278-6029. Tibbits.org

She Loves Me $20. The Snug Theatre, 160 S. Water St., Marine City. Through Dec. 21. 810-278-1749. thesnugtheatre.com

Sister's Christmas Catechism: The Mystery of the Magi's Gold $38. City Theatre, 2301 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Through Dec. 8. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Snow Girls $10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Through Dec. 16. 248-545-5545. theringwald.com

Terry Fator: The Voice of Entertainment $29-79. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Dec. 14 - 15. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

The Vast Difference 18.50-$42. The Purple Rose Theatre Company, 137 Park St., Chelsea. Through Dec. 18. 734-433-7673. purplerosetheatre.org

The Wizard of Oz $12-18. Flint Youth Theatre, 1220 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Dec. 6 - 22. 810-237-1530. flintyouththeatre.org

Two Guys and a Christmas Tree $40 with turkey dinner; $35 show-only. Cornwell's Dinner Theatre, 18935 15 1/2 Mile Rd., Marshall. Through Dec. 21. 269-781-4293. turkeyville.com

Yo Gabba Gabba! Live Holiday Show $26-46. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 6:30 p.m. Dec. 13. 313-471-6611. Olympiaentertainment.com

Editor's Pick

It's touted as the world's longest-running musical for a reason: "The Fantasticks" is a love story with a universal appeal for all generations. "The Fantasticks" runs Dec. 6-22 on the 2nd Stage at the Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette, in downtown Royal Oak.

"The Fantasticks" is the perfect blend of humor and romance set to song. The simple story is about young lovers, a boy, Matt, (Bill Brunner), and a girl, Luisa, (Cassie Najor), who also happen to be next-door neighbors. Their fathers (Jack Tillotson and John Nowaczyk) approve of the relationship and cleverly devise a plan of reverse-psychology to help bring their children together. They build a wall between the two yards which they hope holds an allure of forbidden love to their children.

"'The Fantasticks' has long been one of my favorite shows," says director Jody Florkowski. "It is simple in premise, but at the same time, intricate in its message." Call 248-541-6430 for tickets.

ART'N'AROUND

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "Waylande Gregory: Art Deco Ceramics and the Atomic Impulse" 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 16-March 23. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "The Islands of Benoit Mandelbrot: Fractals, Chaos, and the Materiality of Thinking" 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Nov. 16-March 31. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum "From the Archives: Forging Cranbrook's Gatescape" 39221 Woodward Ave., Bloomfield Hills. Oct. 5-Feb. 22. 877-462-7262. Cranbrookart.edu

Detroit Institute of Arts "Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy" 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 1-Jan. 13. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

Detroit Institute of Arts "Foto Europa, 1850 to the Present" 2100 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 25-March 30. 313-833-7900. Dia.org

Flint Institute of Arts "Free Saturdays" 1120 E. Kearsley St., Flint. Sep. 14-Feb. 22. 810-234-1695. Flintarts.org

Krasl Art Center "Sketches to Sculptures, Rendered Reality: Sixty Years With Marshall M. Fredericks" 707 Lake Blvd., St. Joseph. Nov. 8-Jan. 12. 269-983-0271. Krasl.org

Michigan State University Museum "An Extraordinary Document of Our World and Detroit Resurgent" 409 W. Circle Drive, East Lansing. Sep. 8-Jan. 12. 517-355-7474. museum.msu.edu

MOCAD "Monster Drawing Rally" Tickets: $10. 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 7 p.m. Dec. 6. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

MOCAD "The Past is Present" 4454 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Sep. 6-Jan. 5. 313-832-6622. Mocadetroit.org

Pewabic Pottery "Made by Hand: Detroit's Ceramic Legacy." 5401 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Oct. 19-Jan. 12. 313-833-1805. Pewabic.org

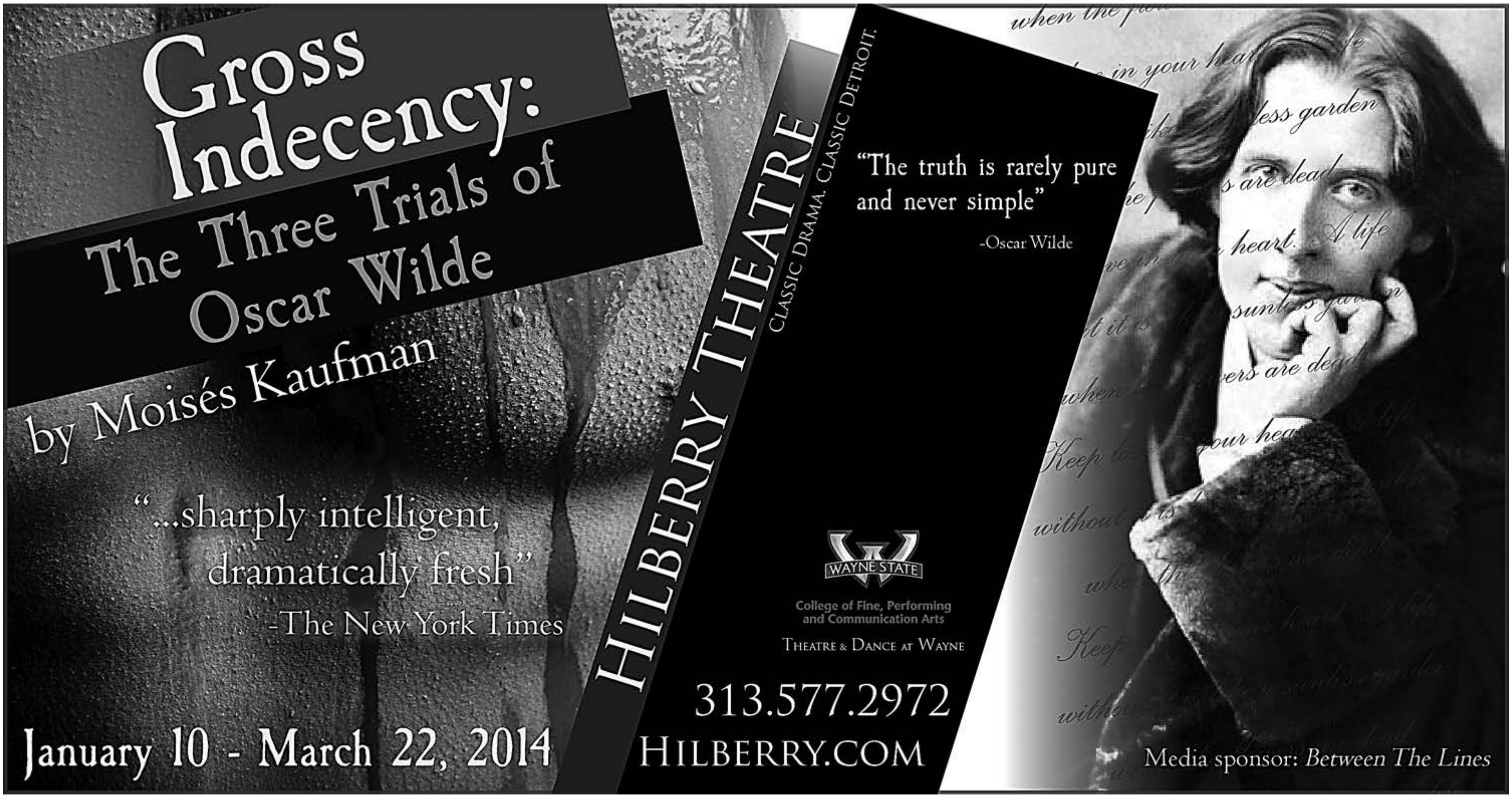
robert kidd gallery "Kevin Tolman: Recent Works" 107 Townsend St., Birmingham. Nov. 9-Dec. 19. 248-642-3909. Robertkiddgallery.com

Saugatuck Center for the Arts "Art a Loan" Juried student exhibition. 400 Culver St., Saugatuck. Nov. 13-Dec. 8. 269-857-2399. Sc4a.org

UICA "25th Annual Holiday Artists' Market" Two Fulton West, Grand Rapids. Dec. 6-Dec. 7. Uica.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Fragments from the Past: Islamic Art from the Collection of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology." University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Nov. 30-March 31. 734-763-4186. Umma.umich.edu

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Adolph Gottlieb: Sculptor." University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Sep. 21-Jan. 5. 734-763-4186. umma.umich.edu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Deep Inside Hollywood

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Aly Michalka makes that 2 ½ men + 1 lesbian + her girlfriend

CBS is getting another prime-time lesbian when it adds Aly Michalka to the cast of "Two and A Half Men." The star of the Disney Channel series "Phil of The Future," now all grown up, will play Amber Tamblyn's love interest on the long-running sitcom. This is great news. More lesbians are always a good thing. But given that Tamblyn's character is meant to be the kind of no-rules lesbian version of Charlie Sheen's former self, it's anyone's guess as to how long this love interest will remain interesting. In a perfect world where this show stays on the air for an infinite number of seasons – thanks to an old-fashioned Hollywood deal with Satan, or whatever the pagan lesbian equivalent is – the ladies would take over the series entirely, they'd adopt a baby daughter played by the kind of twins who'd grow up to be entirely self-possessed and un-ruined like the Olsens, Conchata Ferrell would stay put and it would be rebranded as "Three and A Half Women." Doesn't hurt to dream.

'Chozen' wasn't just somebody's crazy idea. It's really going to air.

When we last reported on this project, it seemed like it would never see the light of day. And honestly, you could be forgiven for thinking that Danny McBride ("Eastbound and Down") was pulling everyone's leg when he started developing an animated series about a gay, rapping, ex-convict for FX's new offshoot channel FXX. But he wasn't. "Chozen," from Grant Dekernion (also "Eastbound & Down") along with Adam Reed and Matt Thompson ("Archer") and featuring the voices of McBride, Bobby Moynihan ("Saturday Night Live"), Michael Pena and Method Man, has hurled itself through all those pilot stage hoops and onto the network's roster, beginning in January. Oh, yeah, and the main character is a big beefy fella, too, one who's shown posing with men wearing bear masks in the show's publicity photos. In other words, this thing appears to be courting the more bearded element of its gay audience, a highly loyal subset of men who eat up all media representations of themselves. Good move, "Chozen." May you live many seasons and appreciate your enthusiastic fans. Ask Nick Frost about this. He'll have some helpful advice.

Samuel L. Jackson changes his mind

Once upon a time, when asked what he'd never do on camera, Samuel L. Jackson said something to the effect of never wanting to dress up like a woman and kiss another man. Now, whether or not he believed these two activities were inextricably linked is a mystery, but what isn't mysterious is the actor's change of perspective. Call it the homosexualizing influence of multiple plane-snakes, call it divine intervention, whatever you like, but Sam Jackson is about to play gay in the big-screen adaptation of Stephen King's 2006 novel "Cell." An end-of-the-world horror story, the premise is that mobile phones are emitting a signal turning people into homicidal maniacs. John Cusack will play a father searching for his young son as the world melts down around him and Jackson's character, a gay, ex-military engineer, is the man who helps Cusack to safety. Production begins in 2014 and, as of now, there are no reports indicating that Jackson will be required to do drag for the part. If that changes, they should really hire on RuPaul as a consultant to help the man get everything tucked in just right and perfect his ability to lip-sync for his life.

That new Tim Gunn show may eclipse 'Project Runway'

It starts in January and it's called "Under The Gunn" (no jokes, please, they're unseemly). It stars "Project Runway"'s resident sane person, Tim Gunn, and it's going to be a reality competition featuring charismatic and popular "Runway" alumni like Mondo Guerra, Anya Ayoung-Chee and the ubiquitous Nick Verreos. The premise will involve those designers mentoring new designers and people being kicked off the show regularly. And that means a healthy amount of crying and fighting, the real reason you watch this sort of thing in the first place. It's a great idea and a nice lateral step of independence for Gunn because, seriously, when was the last time you watched "Project Runway" or remember who won? The man may enjoy the steady gig as Ms. Klum's right hand man, but it's an excellent idea for him to step out on his own and imprint his own warmth and goodness onto a project he can call his own. Maybe he'll develop a new catchphrase, too.

Romeo San Vicente thinks Samuel Jackson's drag name could easily be Royale With-Cheese. He can be reached care of this publication or at DeepInsideHollywood@qsyndicate.com.

The 12 Drags of Christmas

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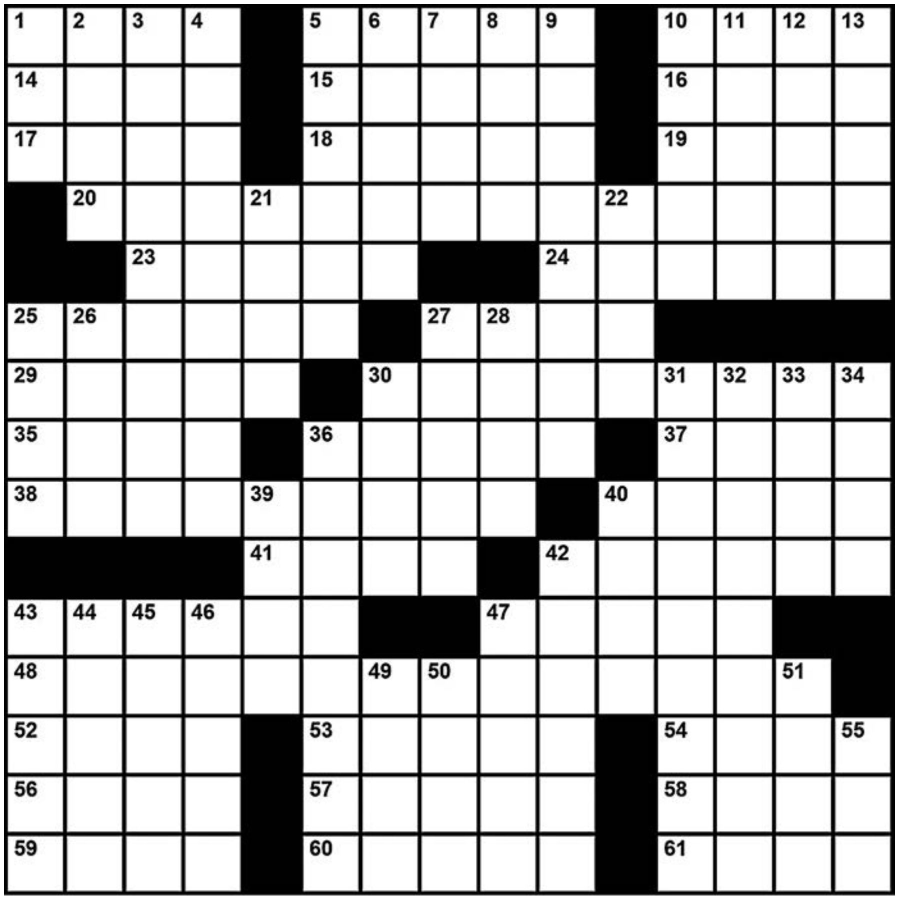

Across

1 Lance once of ‘N Sync
5 Impotence confession
10 Mush
14 Madeline of “Young Frankenstein”
15 Jewish scripture
16 “___ that dares not speak its name”
17 Where a cobbler puts the tongue
18 Blow job, when you’re not in the mood
19 Tributes in verse
20 He did a spoof on the horrors of ENDA
23 Where Patty Sheehan putts it
24 Tricks
25 Lands in the lake
27 Worker at the bottom
29 Sticky-tongued critters
30 With 38-Across, one of the horrors of ENDA
35 “Born Free” lioness
36 Subject to random chance
37 Prefix with peein’?
38 See 30-Across
40 Enjoyed a cologne queen, old-style
41 The color purple and more
42 There are a lot in a lot
43 Tool of Emma Stebbins
47 “Faboo!”
48 Word in the spoof for a mermaid that can’t be fired because of ENDA
52 Bite it
53 Rifles
54 Lincoln-Douglas debates subject Scott
56 Hit on the head
57 You must remember this
58 Morales of “NYPD Blue”
59 Spanking spot
60 Aden is its capital
61 Feudal slave

Down

1 Library inventory (abbr.)
2 Sounds of “Baby, that was good!”
3 One that holds your belt in a gay bar
4 Showed disdain for
5 Has a seven-year problem with Marilyn?
6 “Suzanne” composer Leonard
7 Middle name of “Viva, Las Vegas” singer
8 Undercover crack investigator, perhaps
9 Field for Jane Spahr
10 Shakespeare’s theatre
11 Mine bonanzas
12 In-your-face
13 Italian sauce
21 Engages in foreplay
22 Dotterman’s “Antonia’s ___ “
25 Caesar’s way
26 Foot fetish target
27 Summer fruits
28 “Horny” animals
30 Personal lubricant ingredient
31 Roundworms
32 Lovers have intercourse in this
33 Gardner of mystery
34 Goes to seed
36 Dirty dealing
39 Mother of Poseidon
40 Hit boxers
42 Incites to attack
43 Steadying wedge
44 Marsh wader
45 Cara of “Fame” fame
46 What the boastful blow
47 “Try someone else”
49 Opening
50 Come and go
51 Cause of the Tin Woodsman’s rust
55 “What’s the ___?”

Solution on pg. 43

Photo: Tony Lowe

► 12 Drags

Continued from p. 34

gathering a prime selection of drag talent, putting them into some fierce dance numbers, splicing in some comedy and making it sparkle.

"People are spending money, not only for the cause but also to see an excellent show – and we deliver every single time," Baglio said. "It's an amazing show."

"We've made sure that the entertainment and show that we put together is above all the best," Murphy added. "We have backup dancers and big production numbers with special costumes. We're actually going to make it snow inside during the show."

While the numbers themselves are spectacular, without the charisma, flash and camp of a good queen behind them, they'd be lost. Every sleigh needs its Rudolph. Luckily, "12 Drags" has that part covered too. Expect top-notch queens like Jacqueline Frost, Spacee Kadet and Sydney Charles to be serving Cher, Adele and Richard Simmons, among others.

"Now, of course, there's DeAngela Show Shannon; she's helping us put together most of the production numbers," Murphy said. "April Summers, she's a living legend. She's going to be bringing her nationally known Patti LaBelle and Aretha Franklin to the show."

"We're showcasing the best of the best," Baglio said.

Judging from the excitement of the people behind the show, the audience is in for the draggiest holiday special this side of the Detroit River.

> *"People are spending money, not only for the cause but also to see an excellent show – and we deliver every single time. It's an amazing show."*

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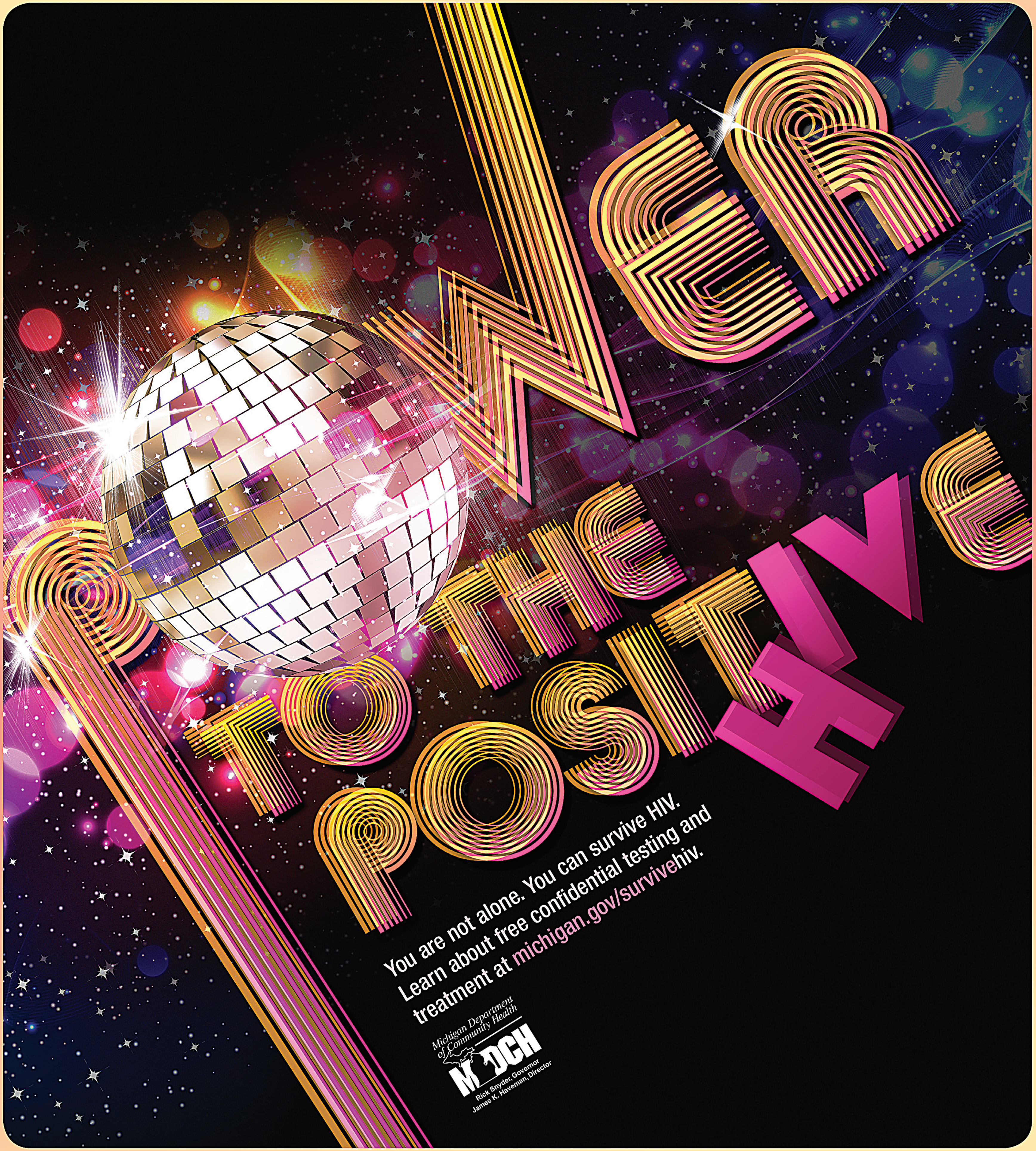
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